The Nation.

November 6, 1989 $1.75 U.S./$2.25 Canada

APR 4

PERIODICALS DEPARTMENT

EDITORIAL

LIKE THE AFRIKANERS

As Stephen Rosenfeld wrote in *The Washington Post*, there is "An Afrikaner Example for Israel." On October 15, eight black leaders were released from prison; by contrast an Israeli was sentenced to six months for meeting with Yasir Arafat. President F.W. de Klerk held "talks about talks" with Bishop Desmond Tutu and others, while Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir rejected efforts to set up an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue in Cairo. Rosenfeld's fantasy that Shamir might follow de Klerk's example is attractive, if a bit naïve.

Neither Shamir nor de Klerk's actions can be understood without looking at the crucial role played by the United States. By endorsing existing sanctions (although resisting new ones) and meeting with black leaders like Albertina Sisulu, the Bush Administration sent a signal to white South Africa: The days of "constructive engagement" are over. South Africa is turning to negotiations because the black resistance cannot be crushed, and economic isolation has been taking a heavy toll.

By contrast, in the Middle East the United States is now in the absurd position of trying to set up talks (Egyptian-Israeli) about talks (Palestinian-Israeli) about talking about elections that would select Palestinians to talk to Israel about an interim settlement of their conflict. Military cooperation between Israel and the United States has grown closer, and media discussion of human rights abuses in the occupied territories has practically stopped. P.L.O. officials here for the opening of the United Nations General Assembly were forbidden to hold a press conference, on pain of losing their visas. Sooner or later Israel will have to stop denying the Palestinians' claims and talk with their chosen representatives. If Israel is to follow the Afrikaner example, U.S. policy will also have to change.

THE INVESTOR
Edward Sorel

KILLING GUATEMALA'S RAIN FOREST
Victor Perera

THE E.P.A.'S REVOLVING DOOR
Jim Sibbison

SCENES FROM 'MASTERGATE'
Larry Gelbart

MARSHALL/ 'NATION' POETRY WINNER

BRAQUE AND PICASSO
Arthur C. Danto

THE *NEWS-FREE PRESS* CASE

PRESERVING NEWSPAPERS OR MONOPOLY?

STEPHEN R. BARNETT

The U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments October 30 on a proposed joint-operating agreement between *The Detroit News* and the *Detroit Free Press*. At stake, along with billions of dollars in monopoly profits for the nation's two largest newspaper chains, is the fate of the dwindling daily newspaper competition in U.S. cities.

The Court will be taking its first look at the Newspaper Preservation Act of 1970, and quite possibly its last. The act lets two papers in the same city merge their business sides into a joint-operating agreement (J.O.A.), with news functions remaining theoretically separate, if one paper is "failing." The rationale was to preserve an editorial voice that otherwise would disappear. In fact, J.O.A.s have increased the homogenization of metropolitan dailies and have hurt competing papers and other media.

The Detroit deal is the ultimate J.O.A. Its approval would give the green light for publishers in two dozen cities that still have competing dailies—among them New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Denver and Boston—to renounce the hard life of competition in favor of cushy two-paper monopolies.

Meanwhile, publishers possessing J.O.A.s have begun moving to the next step: killing one of the papers and sharing even greater profits from the resulting single-paper monopoly. This has happened in St. Louis and Miami, and San Francisco may be next.

The Supreme Court thus steps in as publishers near their goal of converting the Newspaper Preser-

(*Continued on Page 530*)

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LETTERS.

THE GERMAN COMMUNE

Geneva

Two small factual corrections are needed in Hilary Wainwright's perceptive analysis of European labor activity stepping up prior to 1992 and the completion of the European internal market ["A Social Charter for the E.C.?" July 17].

Wainwright perpetuates two myths based on an admiration of British paternalism that is unjustified. First, the roots of German *Mitbestimmung* ("codetermination") go back way beyond the "Anglo-American occupation . . . after the war" as she asserts. In fact the U.S. proconsul vetoed proposed codetermination laws that had been ratified in referendums in the U.S. occupation zone. The British too were indifferent to German calls for economic democracy and it took industrial action before the first, limited codetermination laws in the steel and coal industries were passed in 1951. The current law, the extension of which Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher opposes, dates back only to 1976.

The other myth is that industrial unionism was devised by the British Trade Union Congress. Industrial unionism is a Marxist (or, more accurately, pre-1914 social democratic) concept that had long been German union policy prior to 1945. Nazism taught German unions the folly of political or religious divides, but they already were committed to industrial unionism. The T.U.C. and the World Federation of Trade Unions refused to support a kind of big general union (a German I.W.W.) proposed by the old Weimar labor leader Hans Böckler in 1945. German labor owes much more to national traditions and internal factors for the patterns of its postwar development.

These ongoing national differences also mean that European labor unity and joint action in view of 1992 are much more difficult to achieve than readers might understand from Wainwright's upbeat report on the interesting and positive ideas and activities of the German metalworkers' union, I.G. Metall.

Denis MacShane
International Metalworkers' Federation

THE WESTERN QUESTION

New York City

Your October 2 editorial "Borderline Marxists" correctly stated that the exodus from East to West Germany cannot be interpreted, as many commentators have, as a sign of the bankruptcy of the ideas of Karl Marx. Yet rhetoric gets the better of truth when you write that "the newcomers have gone from Stalin back to Marx"—to the West German Social Democratic Party, a party whose formation you wrongly attribute to Marx. In fact, in 1875 he unmistakably and sharply expressed his *Critique of the Gotha Program*, in which he wondered how socialists could "conceive the workers' movement from the narrowest national standpoint . . . after the work of the International." This narrow national standpoint became fully blown in 1914, when the Social Democratic Party, en masse, voted for war credits to support the imperialist war. The genuine internationalist wing of the party was liquidated. Rosa Luxemburg was murdered with the knowledge and probable connivance of Social Democratic Party leadership. It helped clear the way for Nazism.

As for your uncritical attitude toward West Germany as "a nation with a highly organized system of social benefits and social security, job protection and worker participation in management," the narrow nationalism Marx pointed to runs deep in today's enlightened capitalist Germany. The welcome for the East Germans is in direct contrast to the treatment of Turkish workers who are shunted across borders by the market that you argue is limited by enlightened forces, i.e., the state. This limitation helps control the movement of labor, especially if that labor is the wrong color. Moreover, if there is one place where East meets West it is in the extent to which the state is involved in "controlling" not the market but oppositional thought and activity. Redbaiting, harassment and the listing of leftists and union militants plays an essential part in regulating and "limiting" West German society.

While West Germany may be "freer" than East Germany, *The Nation* should paint it as it is, not with a human face.

Nigel Gibson

ON THE 'MORAL BANDWAGON'?

St. Paul

There is a highly moralistic subcurrent in *The Nation*'s pages that increasingly worries me, most recently epitomized by Robin Warshaw's categorical censure of fraternities ("In the Bonds of Fraternity," Aug. 21/28), or frequent and monotonous attacks by other writers on the tobacco industry. Leftists, more than others, should be sensitive to the fact that, historically, the United States has been hostile to all socialisms save two: "lemon socialism," the nationalization of unprofitable industries, and what might be called "sinner socialism," or the overthrow of that part of capitalism that caters to the "vices" of the misbegotten masses. Middle-class Americans are capable of becoming veritable Bolshevik revolutionaries—provided that the entertainment, alcohol, tobacco and similar industries are the expropriators to be expropriated, and particularly if social control of individual (rather than institutional) behavior will be the culmination of expropriation.

A scant fifteen years ago, left-wing theorists commonly diagnosed America's perennial spasms of moralism, such as Prohibition and Comstockery, as pretexts for the construction of those social machineries necessary to impose economic discipline over individuals. Presumably, considerations such as these motivate *The Nation*'s frequent insistence that the proper way to deal with media hegemony is to break up media monopolies, rather than create censorship mechanisms that would eventually be used against both ordinary people and the left. One might have hoped, therefore, that *The Nation* would critique (rather than merely parrot) the country's current spasm of moralism. Is it any coincidence that the assault on smoking and the tobacco industry comes at a time when smoking is on the decline among the upper middle classes and is thereby increasingly associated with the socially inferior? After all, it was the Victorian association of drinking with the "backward," and others said to be afflicted by faulty morals, that made Prohibition possible.

Similarly, what Warshaw seems to find most objectionable about fraternities is their morally nonconformist atmosphere—she makes allegations of drunkenness, irresponsibility, sexual and other vulgarity, disrespect for authority and general yahooism. And like the New Right and the Prohibitionists, Warshaw is less interested in addressing specific wrongs than in exploiting them as a pretext for state-directed thought control against bad attitudes. Does the mere substitution of the word "macho" for "heathen" make Warshaw's analysis any more progressive than something penned by, say, Jimmy Swaggart? More serious, if both unrespectability and guilt by association can be taken as grounds for suppression, as Warshaw advocates, what makes Warshaw think that the same social mechanisms will not be used against anything else that middle-class official culture might deem unrespectable in the future—such as homosexuality, or the political left?

In short, given a neoconservative political climate obsessed with the need to restrict, restrain, set limits, make rules and firm up boundaries against "barbarism," are "left-wing" attacks on vice such as these truly progressive? Or rather, are they symptoms of the prevailing middle-class hysteria over "ethical illiteracy" and "moral relativism"? Gabriel Kolko, among others, once showed how Progressivism was hardly "progressive."

More generally, can it be said that *The Nation* is truly doing its job when it climbs aboard moral bandwagons popular among the dominant classes, rather than viewing the very fact of their popularity in these quarters as reason for skepticism? The middle classes, after all, once regarded Prohibition, social purity and eugenics as among the most "progressive" stances of all.

Ronald P.S. Mahler

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CONTENTS.

Volume 249, Number 15

LETTERS
514

EDITORIALS
513 Like the Afrikaners
515 Cruel October
516 Fix in Namibia? *Mark Verbaan*
517 Cry, Argentina *Jaime Malamud-Goti*

COLUMNS
518 Uncivil Liberties *Calvin Trillin*
519 The Investor *Edward Sorel*
520 Minority Report *Christopher Hitchens*

ARTICLES
513 The *News-Free Press* Case: Preserving Newspapers Or Monopoly? *Stephen R. Barnett*
521 An Ecological Catastrophe: A Forest Dies in Guatemala *Victor Perera*
524 Going for Superfund Gold: Revolving Door at the E.P.A. *Jim Sibbison*
528 Scenes From the Play: *Mastergate*—The Scandal Continues *Larry Gelbart*

BOOKS & THE ARTS
534 The Lenore Marshall/*Nation* Poetry Prize—1989 *Amy Clampitt*
537 Kidder: Among Schoolchildren
Weiler: Women Teaching for Change: Gender, Class and Power *Herbert Kohl*
538 Ross: No Respect: Intellectuals And Popular Culture *Jon Wiener*
540 Art *Arthur C. Danto*

Illustrations by Isadore Seltzer

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Manuscripts: The magazine cannot be responsible for the return of unsolicited manuscripts unless accompanied by addressed, stamped envelopes.

Publisher, Arthur L. Carter

President and Associate Publisher, David Parker; *General Manager*, Neil Black; *Advertising Director*, Chris Calhoun; *Business Manager*, Ann B. Epstein; *Bookkeepers*, Tanveer Mall, Ivor A. Richardson; *Art/Production Manager*, Jane Sharples; *Circulation Director*, Margaret Pyle; *Subscription Manager*, Cookee V. Klein; *Director, Nation Books*, Elsa Dixler; *Receptionists*, Greta Loell, Vivette Dhanukdhari; *Mail Clerk*, John Holtz; *Administrative Secretary*, Shirley Sulat; *Production*, Terry Miller; *Typography*, Randall Cherry, Sandy McCroskey; *Nation Associates: Director*, Sandra Zickefoose, *Assistant Director*, Carlos Durazo; *Syndication*, Jeff Sorensen; *New Business Manager*, Jay Pearsall; *Special Projects Director*, Peter G. Meyer; *InterNation*, Chris Calhoun.

The Nation (ISSN 0027-8378) is published weekly (except for the first week in January, and biweekly in July and August) by The Nation Company, Inc. © 1989 in the U.S.A. by The Nation Company, Inc., 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011. (212) 242-8400. *Washington Bureau:* Suite 308, 110 Maryland Avenue N.E., Washington, DC 20002. (202) 546-2239. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. International Telex: 667 155 NATION. Subscription orders, changes of address and all subscription inquiries: *The Nation*, Box 1953, Marion, OH 43305. *Subscription Price*: One year, $36; two years, $64. Add $14 for surface mail postage outside U.S. Claims for missed issues must be made within 60 days (120 days foreign) of publication date. **Please allow 4-6 weeks for receipt of your first issue and for all subscription transactions.** Back issues $3 prepaid ($4 foreign) from: *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011. *The Nation* is available on microfilm from: University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Nation*, Box 1953, Marion, OH 43305. This issue went to press on October 19.

EDITORIALS.

Cruel October

On Monday, October 9, the stock market, as measured by the Dow Jones industrial average, closed at an all-time high of 2,791.41. The Wall Street consensus was that things were going swimmingly. Dow 3,000 seemed just around the corner, and there was no recession in sight.

Then, less than a week later, it seemed like October 1987 all over again. In a little more than an hour, the market gave up almost 200 of the 1,000 points it had gained since its post-crash low in December 1987. Once again, October earned its reputation as Wall Street's cruelest month.

Dispensers of reassurance worked the press throughout the weekend to assure the investing public that there was to be no Black Monday II. Although Monday's opening was rocky, the stock market soon rallied, dispelling fears that October 1987 was about to be rerun. Wall Street cynics, never in short supply, suspect that the rally was stage-managed by the Fed, the exchanges and the large brokerage firms.

The proximate cause of the mini-crash was the collapse of a proposed takeover of United Airlines by its executives, the

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pilots' union and British Airways when the banks financing the deal got cold feet. This was only the latest in a series of mishaps that have been plaguing the debt-financed takeover game for months. Old deals have gone sour as leveraged operators found their interest burden too heavy to service, and new deals have become more difficult to sell as lenders grow more skeptical. So the collapse of the United Airlines proposal was like a spark to dry straw—speculators feared that this time the jig might really be up.

In itself, that might be good news. The takeover mania has destabilized the productive economy and enriched an unsavory new stratum of leverage artists and their bankers; saying good riddance to the lot would be a pleasure. The problem is the mess they've left behind. Thousands of deals have been consummated throughout the Roaring Eighties on a trio of assumptions: There will always be a bottomless well of liquidity from which to borrow, there will always be buyers for the pieces of leveraged firms that must be sold to pay down debt, and the economy will never again enter a recession.

Thus Wall Street's touching faith in the "soft landing scenario," which assumes that the business cycle is now a thing of the past, and a landscape of slow growth and low inflation extends as far as the eye can see. But one of the reasons deals have been going sour is precisely that the economy has slowed. It's hard to understand how heavily indebted corporations can survive without rapid growth and rising prices. Making such an argument, though, brands one as a captive of old habits of thought.

An important contrast between the maxi-crash of 1987 and the mini-crash of 1989 is in the behavior of the Fed and its foreign colleagues. Two years ago, fearful of a reprise of the 1930s, central banks furiously pumped money into the world economy for several months, thereby keeping it from stalling. In 1989, with economic activity notably slower than it was two years ago, they feel no such compulsion. Foreign central banks have been tightening credit policy, and our Fed has only slightly loosened its reins. Federal Reserve chair Alan Greenspan still talks of getting inflation to zero over the next several years—which means years of unrelenting tightness.

Even if the Dow recovers and makes its way to 3,000 or beyond, the great question still remains: How do you end a mania gracefully, that is, without the depression that logically follows? Stage-managed recoveries can't solve this problem over the long term.

Fix in Namibia?

Windhoek

As Africa's last colony prepares for its first ever independent election, foreign observers continue to flood into the country, each determined to expose any attempt at ballot rigging. Every stage of the November vote will be monitored by United Nations officials, and U.N. Special Representative Martti Ahtisaari must certify the final result before it can be declared. South Africa has been at great pains to stress its neutrality in the process, as U.N. Security Council Resolution 435 demands.

But there are reasons to fear a disruption of the vote by Pretoria's dirty tricks department. For years, South Africa has sent young white men to die in its war against the South-West Africa People's Organization, and there is no reason to believe that it now suddenly regards Swapo as an acceptable choice to be Namibia's new government. Swapo has declared its intention of joining the frontline states and the Organization of African Unity, and of allowing the banned African National Congress to operate—although not for military purposes—inside an independent Namibia. A Swapo victory at the polls might provoke a further conservative backlash against South African President F.W. de Klerk, who is already accused by the right of "selling out" Namibia. After the ruling National Party's heavy loss of support in September's general election, de Klerk can hardly relish being seen as the man who allowed "terrorists" to come to power in what many whites still regard as South Africa's fifth province.

Here are some ways Pretoria might seek to influence the Namibian vote.

Control of the Bureaucracy. Many South African civil servants hold powerful positions in the electoral infrastructure. Chief Electoral Officer Andries Visser, for example, is charged with the organization and control of the election and is entitled to appoint polling and counting officials. But Visser was also a member of the secret South-West Africa National Security Council, which plotted to prevent a Swapo victory. It is believed to have been disbanded, but only after the implementation of Resolution 435 in April. A council document leaked to a local newspaper in June revealed it to have been made up of high-ranking civil servants, politicians and police and army chiefs. At a meeting in September 1988, attended by top South African military officials, the N.S.C. discussed a plan to stop Swapo from winning U.N.-supervised elections "at all costs."

Inadequate Polling Arrangements. The original electoral law, drafted in July, was rife with opportunities for fraud, ranging from inadequate provisions for the secrecy of the ballot to a chaotic and confused vote-counting system. After protests by Ahtisaari, a much-revised law was promulgated on October 13. But there is still concern over the number of polling stations provided. Although close to 60 percent of the population lives in northern Namibia, less than 40 percent of polling stations will be located there. Many of the 600,000 residents of the north live in isolated rural areas without transport; in some cases it could take days to reach a voting place. Since a large majority of northern residents support Swapo, this could work to South Africa's advantage. (Pretoria may now be less concerned with securing victory for a friendly party than with preventing Swapo from winning a two-thirds majority, which would allow it to write a constitution and establish a government in any manner it sees fit.)

Fraud and Intimidation. An international team of 1,700 U.N. Transition Assistance Group election specialists is on hand to supervise the South African administration's election staff. In addition, some 1,500 U.N. police monitors are

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assigned to polling stations along with the 6,000 local police under South African control. Special Representative Ahtisaari appears satisfied that Untag can monitor any attempts at fraud.

However, many South Africa–inspired acts of intimidation have escaped Untag's notice, for the simple reason that members of the peacekeeping force are not familiar with local languages. The election law states that the ballot paper and voting procedure must be explained to illiterate voters by a South African official in the presence of an Untag monitor and an interpreter. The potential for abuse arises when the impartiality of the interpreter is in question.

Improper "Voter" Registration. Reports of abuses during the seven-month election campaign have included: members of the South African security forces, hurriedly registered to vote before withdrawing from Namibia with the intention of returning to vote for "any party but Swapo"; Angolan civilians in the Angola-Namibia border area, forced by Jonas Savimbi's Unita to register to vote against Swapo; and thousands of white South Africans, many of whom have never lived in Namibia but are qualified to vote by virtue of having Namibian-born parents.

Violence. If Swapo appears likely to win, South Africa may even be tempted to provoke a climate of civil war in Namibia. Already, political violence in the first half of October has left several people dead, leading U.N. Secretary General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar to issue Untag with emergency evacuation orders. This unrest was caused by members of the now-disbanded paramilitary force known as *Koevoet* ("Crowbar"). In a sworn affidavit, one former *Koevoet* member said that when the unit was incorporated into the local police, it was told by its commanding officer that "simply because we were no longer *Koevoet* did not mean that we were not still going to make war. He said that should Swapo come to power we would fight again."

South Africa–instigated violence could force a collapse of the independence process and a withdrawal of the U.N. peacekeeping force. One resulting scenario would be for South Africa to regain total control of Namibia and issue a unilateral declaration of independence. Knowing the disastrous international backlash that this would certainly provoke, Pretoria would embark on such a course only if it felt sure it could pin the blame squarely on Swapo. This is hardly farfetched, if one recalls South Africa's propaganda coup last April, when it accused Swapo troops based in Angola of "invading" Namibia.

MARK VERBAAN

Mark Verbaan is director of the Namibia News Service.

Cry, Argentina

Argentine President Carlos Saúl Menem issued a decree on October 6 pardoning military personnel who had been prosecuted or convicted for three kinds of offenses: human rights violations committed during the military regime of 1976-83; mismanagement during the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas war; and a series of mutinies against the army high command. These pardons freed some forty retired officers guilty of torture and murder, the commanders of the three branches of the armed forces sentenced for wartime negligence, and more than 150 officers tried for rebellion against the elected government of Raúl Alfonsín, which took office in late 1983. Menem justified his action as a necessary step toward national reconciliation, but it will have a deleterious effect on Argentine democracy.

The trials of military officers by civilian courts for crimes committed during Argentina's "dirty war" enraged an ultrarightist faction of the army, which staged the first of three revolts during Easter Week of 1987. The rebels insisted that their war against subversion had been a "political fact" and as such demanded a political settlement. When Alfonsín moved to suppress the rebellions, he received unprecedented public support. Hundreds of thousands thronged the squares of Argentina's major cities in defense of democracy, with demonstrators surrounding army barracks to prevent potential rebels from joining the mutineers. Although loyalist forces were able to suffocate each of the revolts, the rebels gained a reputation as the most effective advocates of the army's cause.

The rebellions polarized Argentine opinion about the military's responsibility for the dirty war. The Alfonsín government held that the human rights violators had to be punished because the democratic system depended largely on its leaders' ability to assert the supremacy of democratic institutions. This meant demonstrating that no person or group was immune from the egalitarian reach of these institutions. History had shown the failure of attempts to appease powerful bodies such as the armed forces; appeasement only stripped democratic institutions of their credibility, causing popular consensus to wither.

The opposing view held that only military tribunals could pass judgment on the armed forces. The army rebels used two overlapping arguments to support their case: first, that civilian institutions have no authority to judge the methods used by the military during wartime; and second, that these actions took place at a "pre-democratic" stage of Argentina's history, saving the country from disintegration and consequently making democracy possible. These pseudo-moral contentions were supported by politicians who claimed that the armed forces, too powerful to be challenged overtly, should be left alone for reasons of prudence. Furthermore, they argued, the past should not be turned into a burning contemporary issue that would consume the authorities' time and energy. The military, then, should be exempt from the rules that govern ordinary citizens.

With his pardons, President Menem may be seeking to defuse the military's animosity toward civilian politicians. He may even believe that the amnesty will rob the army right-wingers of their appeal to their comrades. But the new policy is likely to have onerous consequences. Voters will feel either that the democratic system is too weak to stand by the decisions of the courts, or that the principle of equality before the law is too fickle to be worthy of serious defense. For one administration to put military officers on

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trial and convict them, only to have its successor set them free, is to engender cynicism.

Menem's policy may appear effective at first because it will reduce the relentless pressure from the military. In addition, since government austerity programs are likely to bring about a great deal of social unrest, Menem may feel it wise to establish a strong alliance with the armed forces. But future problems are easy to predict, for the military's expectations about its role in politics go well beyond the immediate issue of the trials. When the confrontation comes, faith in the democratic system will have been considerably weakened, the elected government will find that it lacks popular support, and a renewed bout of authoritarian rule may prove too strong a temptation. Avoiding confrontation in the short term is not the way to secure peace.

JAIME MALAMUD-GOTI

Jaime Malamud-Goti, the former Solicitor before the Supreme Court of Argentina, was an adviser on human rights to President Raúl Alfonsín. He designed the policy by which members of the military were prosecuted for violations of human rights.

UNCIVIL LIBERTIES.

CALVIN TRILLIN

I was hardly in a position to criticize the Jesse Helms amendment banning Federal support of obscene or offensive art, since I myself once proposed a law under which anybody attempting to sell macramé would be dyed a natural color and hung out to dry.

I want to point out that my suggestion about macramé was offered during a period of crisis that is difficult to imagine in the relative calm of today. The country was in the midst of a macramé infestation at craft fairs and even in living rooms, creating in some regions a situation that bordered on panic. It was a different time.

All I had to do was open my mouth about the Helms amendment, though, and some of the bleeding hearts who, for reasons I can't imagine, had been offended by my macramé bill would have waved it around to demonstrate that I had once been willing to suppress certain forms of artistic expression myself. I have never denied that I held certain views on the macramé issue during a particular period in our nation's history. My defense, I suppose, rests on what I'd like to think has always separated my cockamamie theories from those of Senator Helms: At least I don't expect to be taken seriously.

Was I also joking, the bleeding hearts would have said, when I proposed legislation making it permissible to place people under citizen's arrest for performing mime in public? More or less. In that discussion, you might remember, I did raise an interesting constitutional argument that still has not been resolved—the possibility that the First Amendment right to free speech has, in effect, been waived by people who as a matter of policy don't say anything.

At any rate, I was quite aware that all of this would be dredged up if I joined in the debate over the Helms amendment, so I maintained an uncharacteristic, almost mime-like silence. This was particularly difficult for me when some senators—including those heavily educated senators who in discussing the issue always seemed to be restraining themselves mightily in order to avoid referring to the honorable gentleman from North Carolina as a yahoo—began rising on the floor of the Senate to mention the Bible passages and the classics of theater and art that could be affected if the amendment passed. I wanted to bring up the case of that famous photograph of American troops raising the flag at Iwo Jima during World War II.

I wanted to point out that the passage of two measures then being considered by the Senate—the Helms amendment and the bill making it a crime to burn the flag—would put the Iwo Jima photograph in what the heavily educated senators might call an anomalous situation. The amendment by Senator Helms would have banned Federal funding not only for art that was found to be obscene but for art that offended any religion. I assume that Jehovah's Witnesses, who believe that a flag is the sort of graven image forbidden in the Ten Commandments, would be deeply offended by the Iwo Jima photograph. So you couldn't show it in, say, an exhibition of great war photographs that had been mounted partly through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. On the other hand, you wouldn't be allowed to burn it.

I didn't say that during the Senate debate, of course, because some smart aleck would have asked how I'd feel about having my tax money being used to help, say, an art museum in Vermont that wants to do a big show called "Brownish Rope: A Macramé Retrospective." That sort of exhibition is not out of the realm of possibility. After all, someone has announced plans to establish what sounds like a sort of museum of mime in, I think, Ann Arbor, Michigan. I'm hazy on the details because I threw away the letter I received from an informant who knew of my interest in the subject, while keeping the bumper sticker he enclosed that says "Honk If You Hate Mime."

The answer to whether I'd like to have my tax dollars spent on a macramé exhibition can, of course, be answered in a few words: as opposed to what? Senator Helms, as some of his critics on this issue have pointed out, wants quite a bit of my tax money spent on subsidizing tobacco farmers. So far, nobody has asked me if I'd be offended by that. It's probably just as well. Trying to choose between macramé and tobacco is the sort of decision that makes the old apples versus oranges debate seem pretty straightforward. It's an example of why it may be that the fewer laws we pass about this sort of thing the better.

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The Investor

EDWARD SOREL

NU? SO WHAT'S IT THIS TIME? ANOTHER DIVORCE? YOU LOST YOUR JOB? YOUR DAUGHTER STILL CAN'T FIND A FELLA?
NO. IT'S THE MARKET... IT GOES UP, DOWN, UP, DOWN... IT'S DRIVING ME CRAZY!
THE MARKET!! BUT YOU PROMISED ME IN '87 THAT YOU'D GET OUT IF I BROUGHT THE DOW BACK TO 2,000! REMEMBER?
I KNOW, I KNOW, BUT THIS TIME I REALLY MEAN IT... BRING BACK THE DOW TO WHERE IT WAS TWO WEEKS AGO AND I'LL GET RID OF EVERY STOCK I OWN! I SWEAR!!
OKAY, OKAY... STOP CRYING. I'LL BRING UP THE MARKET... BUT THIS TIME SELL!!
OH, I WILL, I WILL, BUT THERE'S JUST ONE THING...
...COULD YOU MAKE THE MARKET TAKE A NOSEDIVE RIGHT AFTER I SELL MY STOCKS?
BOY! COULD I CLEAN UP!
I TAKE IT THAT'S A "NO".
EDWARD SOREL

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Passing through the official hole in the Berlin Wall several years ago, I was impressed in spite of myself by the trouble taken by the East German guards to live up to their Hollywood reputation. Dull, surly, bored yet hostile—a combination that takes a little police work—they confiscated everything in print, delighted in rudeness to women and seemed indifferent to the tatty slogans about people's power and peace that adorned their grim little post. One was reminded of what Marx said about Lassalle: that his socialism stank of the Prussian barracks. And East Germany is Prussia all right, as even a short stay will confirm. I was looking for Professor Robert Havemann, who had been in the same Third Reich prison as Erich Honecker but who had developed uncomfortable ideas about political and social democracy and who was therefore a prisoner once more. I couldn't penetrate his house arrest and was trudging back toward Checkpoint Charlie when I saw a red illuminated quotation on a slab in the wall. It contrasted with the foul torpor of the guardhouse on the way in and read, in loose translation:

> Great Carthage fought three wars
> After the first it was still powerful
> After the second it was still inhabitable
> After the third, nobody could find it at all.

This laconic yet arresting observation (or was it verse?) was attributed to Bertolt Brecht. I've since learned, by reading Timothy Garton Ash's *The Uses of Adversity*, that it comes from Brecht's "Open Letter to German Artists and Writers," composed in 1951. Not actually written as poetry, the letter called for the democratic and peaceful reunification of Germany and for the abolition of censorship. I was reading it within a few feet of the ruins of the old Reichstag, and it was being pressed on me as East Germany's claim to be the guardian of peace and stability in Central Europe.

A lot of abysmal history had gone into the fabrication of this ironic and contradictory display. If it is possible to assign a date to the moment when European social democracy and European Communism became lethal antagonists, then July 14, 1927, is a date worth bearing in mind. On that day the powerful social democrats of Vienna were confronted by an open challenge from the clerical right-wing regime. A contemptuously rigged jury had acquitted those who had openly lynched three social democrats in the town of Schattendorf. Furious workers' leaders came to the offices of the Socialist Party, demanding action. They wanted to see the great Otto Bauer. They were told that protest should be verbal only. As Ernst Fischer, who was present at the meeting, records the argument in his marvelous book *An Opposing Man*, the militants from the power stations and factories were instructed: "One can't demonstrate against a verdict returned by jury. . . . Trial by jury is a great democratic achievement. Even if the jury is mistaken, you can't come out into the streets." The next day the workers of Vienna took to the streets anyway and were fired on by the Austrian mounted police.

The failure of social democracy to challenge authority and legality on this and many other occasions meant that the pre-fascist right, which was cynical about its "own" legal norms, had an easy time crushing Vienna's poor for good in the bloodbath of February 1934. (It was these events, brilliantly chronicled by Fischer, that led Elias Canetti to start thinking about crowds and power, and that also led Kim Philby to join the Communist Party.)

Fischer and many like him were so disgusted by the failure of nerve shown by Austrian and German reformists that when they fled, they fled to Moscow. They based their newfound Communism on the idea—vividly illustrated by experience and reality—that "bourgeois" freedom was a sham and a snare. This bifurcation of the European left, between those who cared for democratic proprieties no matter what and those who saw them as an ideological construct, led to disasters from which the Continent has never recovered. Even Fischer, by then a devout Stalinist, became a little upset soon after a talk he gave to the German and Austrian exiles in Moscow, defending the Hitler-Stalin Pact. The Nazis had invaded France, and he was in his room when "suddenly the door flew open and a German Communist rushed in: 'We've taken Paris!' " *Dummkopf*. How terrifying when the lessons of dogma are learned too well. One of the conformists at the meeting where Fischer spoke was Wilhelm Pieck, later President of the "German Democratic Republic." The German Communists managed to outlive Hitler, though not to live down their compromises with him, and when they came home it was as clients of the Red Army.

Given the utter historic discredit of the German right, the cold war in Germany has basically been fought between two wings of the prewar German left: the Schmidts and Brandts on one side of the wall, and the Ulbrichts and Honeckers on the other. In one case we have NATO and hundreds of nuclear missiles as the price of "pluralism"; in the other, a mediocre Sovietization as the price of an ideological commitment to "the first socialist state on German soil." Today, the polarities are being reversed. Red and Green forces in the Federal Republic are challenging the insanity of the nuclear state, and the citizens of the G.D.R. are discovering for themselves that "bourgeois" rights are human rights and worth fighting for as such. The stupid but necessary conflict that began in the battle for Austria in 1927, and continued through Germany in 1933, stands a chance of being resolved. We should not be prevented, by the residual anti-German chauvinism that is such a morbid feature of our culture, from seeing the huge and hopeful opening. In an exhibition at the Reichstag, I saw an old leftist poster showing a horseshoe magnet spanning the German divide. The arm of the magnet planted in the East read "Democracy" and the one planted in the West read "Socialism." A synthesis not unlike this one now seems a real possibility as the one-party state and the cold war go to their graves together. Such a synthesis, in Germany of all places, would not be the end of history but more like a new beginning for it.

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ARTICLES.

AN ECOLOGICAL CATASTROPHE

A Forest Dies In Guatemala

VICTOR PERERA

The evening of our arrival at Yaxchilán, the classical Mayan ceremonial center on the Mexican shore of the Usumacinta River, we spotted two men in olive fatigues on the opposite bank. They were walking downriver with submachine guns slung over their shoulders. The Mexican immigration officer in Frontera Corozal, three miles upriver, had warned us not to camp on the Guatemalan shore because of the dangerous guerrillas who lurk there. I did not tell him that I was a good deal more apprehensive about running into government troops, Guatemalan or Mexican, who tend to be trigger-happy and suspicious of foreigners.

Earlier in the afternoon I had accompanied an international expedition of environmentalists to the top of Shield Jaguar temple, the highest point in Yaxchilán. We gazed across the river at the majestic Sierra del Lacandón, a 2,358-square-mile reserve of dense rain forest containing the last large stand of giant hardwoods in Guatemala's northern region of El Petén. The largest of nine sawmills licensed to operate in Petén, the Aserradero del Norte ("Sawmill of the North"), had already marked 1,000 mahoganies for logging in the Sierra by the end of the year. The 200-foot crests of mahoganies and the tallest cedars and ceibas keep in place the tropical forest's closed canopy, while their shallow root systems help bind together the fragile top soil. The logging of these last mahoganies will aggravate the ecological disaster that is already disrupting climate and rainfall patterns on the Cental American isthmus, and beyond. Recent statistics compiled by Guatemala's Commission for the Environment reveal the country has lost 40 percent of its forest cover during the past thirty years and suffered a 50 percent drop in annual rainfall.

This past January President Vinicio Cerezo signed into law a Protected Areas proposal that converted close to 15 percent of Guatemala's territory into a system of fifty ecological parks and biosphere reserves. The law also creates a National Council of Protected Areas to administer the parks and reserves. About a third of Petén's rain forest, or close to 2.5 million acres, is covered. Four Mayan archeological sites besides Tikal, Guatemala's first and best-known national park, have been added to Petén's protected reserves. Negotiations are under way to link other proposed reserves in the bordering Yucatán Peninsula and in Belize to form a three-nation Maya Peace Park. Another initiative called La Ruta Maya, energetically backed by Wilbur Garrett, editor and publisher of *National Geographic*, would save for enlightened "ecotourism" the chief archeological sites in the region, together with the web of ancient Mayan roads that connect them. If either or both of these larger biosphere reserves materialize, it will mean the largest tropical forest north of the Amazon can still be substantially salvaged. For Cerezo, who was upstaged as Central America's peacemaker by Costa Rica's Nobel Prize winner Oscar Arias, it would mean gaining international recognition as Central America's "green" president.

While the assassination last year of Chico Mendez, the rubber tapper leader and conservationist, focused international attention on the massive deforestation of the Brazilian Amazon, no such event has called the world's attention to a comparable ecological calamity in Guatemala and Chiapas, Mexico. This region has few rubber trees, but its tropical forests abound in Chamaedorea palm, or *xate*, which is the highest priced forest product other than lumber. Known as "evergreen fern," two varieties of *xate* are prized in Europe and in the United States, where they are widely used in floral arrangements.

Just as Brazil's 500,000 rubber tappers have an investment in creating extractive reserves in the Amazon [see Susanna Hecht and Alexander Cockburn, "The Defenders of the Amazon," May 22], so have the harvesters of *xate*, in protecting their harvests in Chiapas and El Petén. An active promoter of extractive reserves is James Nations, an American tropical ecologist and consultant to Guatemala's National Commission on the Environment (Conama). Nations travels the environmental lecture circuit arguing that tropical forests return more profit per acre when they are left standing. For Petén he proposes the creation of huge, diversified plantations that would harvest *xate*, allspice and chicle under the shadow of unmolested stands of giant cedar and mahogany. Although Nations's optimal-returns proposal has convinced key members of Guatemala's legislature and its landowning elite, no grass-roots movement of *xate* or chicle harvesters has arisen to match the rubber tappers' union in Amazonia. For a start, the risks would be even greater than in Brazil: The Guatemalan Army still regards labor cooperatives in rural areas such as Petén as a direct challenge to its authority.

All these problems weighed on my mind when we put back into the river at Yaxchilán the morning after we had spotted the two armed men. During the remainder of that day we sighted spectacular scarlet macaws, toucans and various large birds of prey on both banks of the river. In early morning and late afternoon we heard the bloodcurdling calls of the howler monkey, which sound like jaguars tearing apart the forest. We saw the larger and nimbler spider monkeys only on the densely forested Guatemalan bank, swinging along arboreal highways or hanging on branches by absurdly elongated appendages. The continued presence of the monkeys, and the soft mating

Victor Perera, author of Rites: A Guatemalan Boyhood, *is working on a contemporary portrait of Guatemala.*

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call of a jaguar we'd heard the evening before, gave our spirits a needed lift.

By the following morning we were twenty miles downriver from Yaxchilán. The forest cover on the Mexican side was all gone, except along the deep, narrow canyons, where white-water rapids diverted our attention from the devastation. Midafternoon the next day we pulled into the black sand beach at Piedras Negras, the second most important Mayan site on the river, after Yaxchilán. As we anchored our rafts, two men in olive fatigues came out to meet us, with an M-16 and an AK-47 pointed above our heads. Their tense smiles suggested that news of our arrival had preceded us.

The two men asked our purpose on the river and whether we carried any weapons. After we assured them on both counts, they introduced themselves as members of the Rebel Armed Forces, which together with three other guerrilla groups make up the umbrella organization Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union.

The older of the two guerrillas, who told us he was from Guatemala's highland department of Chimaltenango, was a Cakchiquel Indian who had spent the last twenty years in Petén, as both a homesteader and a combatant. He'd had no contact with his family in nearly a decade and no longer knew whose side they were on. Although he had seen no combat in many months, his eyes shone with dedication to the cause, for which he was prepared to give up his life at any time. He told us his lands in Chimaltenango had been taken away by unscrupulous landowners because he had no title to them and no money to hire a lawyer. He said he was fighting to eradicate poverty and insure a more equitable distribution of land. This was a familiar story throughout the highlands, where poor farmers have been radicalized by the expropriation of their lands. Like other indigenous insurgents I had met, he seemed surprisingly gentle, and avoided the doctrinal rhetoric of his *ladino*, or non-Indian, counterparts. His eyes darkened only once, hinting at a tougher, combat-disciplined side, when I contradicted something he had said. Juan, as he called himself, was about my age, and I instinctively liked and trusted him, so I broached the matter of the Sierra del Lacandón and the mahoganies.

"Yes," he assured me, "We control that zone, and the entire river clear to the Mexican border. We are also a dominant presence in eleven departments of Guatemala, as well as in Chiapas and Belize."

Although this claim sounded farfetched—the product of wishful thinking rather than geopolitical reality—I pursued my line of inquiry, and informed him of the Sawmill of the North and its owner's intention to log 1,000 mahoganies in the Sierra. Would they permit such a flagrant violation of their sovereignty?

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"By no means," he said. "Four years ago we chased away some Mexican engineers who came to take a survey for building a dam. And our *compañeros* to the south are sabotaging your oil companies' explorations in our territory."

This was true. One of the deterrents to the construction of a series of dams on the Usumacinta, proposed in an agreement between Guatemala and Mexico, was the guerrillas' threats to sabotage them. And Amoco had recently suspended activities in Guatemala in part because of guerrilla interference in its field operations.

"How many mahoganies did you say they plan to cut?" Juan asked me.

"One thousand," I said. "And the results of that could be as catastrophic as the stealing of your lands by unscrupulous landowners."

As Juan pondered this, I suggested the best way to enhance their international reputation was to become known as forest conservators, or "green guerrillas." Juan smiled at my little joke, but he promised to take up the matter with his *comandante*.

The next morning, before we parted, Juan came down to share our breakfast, and then gave us half a *tepeiscuintle*, or paca, he had trapped. Paca is a rodent native to Latin America; when roasted, it is by far the tastiest meat in the forest.

"Please extend to your colleagues in North America a warm salute from the Cakchiquel people," Juan said, and waved his weapon at us as we put back into the river.

Virtually none of the foresters, legislators or conservationists I have interviewed in the months since our Usumacinta River journey hold any realistic hope that a substantial fraction of the remaining Petén forest can be saved, much less the one-third prescribed by the new law.

This past May President Cerezo barely survived the second coup attempt in less than a year, which seriously curtailed his executive prerogatives. As his power declines, his support for the Protected Areas statute has become increasingly symbolic. If Cerezo is unseated by a military coup, the Petén biosphere reserve will go out the window with him.

In the meantime, the Sawmill of the North is going ahead with its logging of the Sierra del Lacandón. In July James Nations returned from an excursion to the Sierra with the news that 2,500 mahogany and Spanish cedar had been logged and taken out by the company. Another 500 trees had been felled by contrabandists who took advantage of a new logging road.

Equally alarming are the recent Landsat photographs commissioned by NASA. These reveal the penetration of Mexican loggers into northern areas of Petén, where they have built roads and are taking out hundreds of mahoganies from the newly designated parks. At the same time, Mexican cattle ranchers, in apparent collusion with Guatemalan homesteaders, are moving their zebu herds into border areas cleared for grazing.

Among the few serious initiatives to safeguard what remains of Central America's tropical forests are the debt-for-nature swaps proposed by international banks and private

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agencies. Costa Rica has already negotiated the establishment of national parks and protected reserves in exchange for foreign debt relief, but, unlike Guatemala, Costa Rica does not have 2 million land-hungry Indian and *ladino* farmers. Such farmers are unlikely to benefit directly from debt swap initiatives. Even so, Costa Rica's widely admired forest parks are islands surrounded by deforestation as extensive as that in Chiapas.

During an interview with President Cerezo last July, I questioned him about the runaway logging of the Sierra del Lacandón and the incursions of Mexican loggers and cattle ranchers inside the northern Petén border. He replied that agreements had been drawn up with Mexico to provide tighter border controls, and that the army along with Immigration and Treasury Police were being assigned to patrol the borders against incursions. He claimed to have issued an order revoking the contracts of all the sawmills operating in Petén, and he said he planned to introduce legislation to stop the export of all raw lumber from Guatemala. He added that he intended to dedicate himself after his retirement to the promotion of ecotourism, because the subject "fascinates" him.

One piece of good news on the Petén conservation front came in August. A nationwide publicity campaign and a timely international response prevented Exxon from drilling exploratory wells within the park boundaries of El Ceibal, one of Petén's classical Mayan sites as well as an important forest and wildlife reserve of nearly 2,000 acres. The extensive press coverage given the controversy put the words "ecology" and "biosphere reserve" in the public domain, if not yet on the public's conscience. The controversy also pitted Guatemala's Ministry of Energy and Mines, which estimated the drilling would yield $100 million in oil revenues, against Conama and the Ministry of Culture, whose staff physically obstructed Exxon personnel when they attempted to move equipment into the park. Exxon, still smarting from the furor over the massive Valdez oil spill in Alaska, yielded to the opposition and announced the suspension of a $40 million oil exploration contract with the Guatemalan government.

Not surprisingly, Cerezo immediately took the credit for stopping the drilling in El Ceibal. But the logging by sawmills and contrabandists continues unchecked throughout northern Petén, as do the border invasions by Mexican loggers, poachers and cattle ranchers. In recent months there has been an influx of Salvadoran and Nicaraguan illegal aliens into Petén, many of whom are involved in marijuana cultivation. Instead of helping to safeguard the borders, Guatemalan military officials continue to collect bribes from the Mexican intruders, as well as from the Central American refugees. And eight months after the passage of the Protected Areas statute, Cerezo has yet to allocate any funds for hiring and training park personnel to enforce the law.

The coming destruction of Petén's rain forest will be as calamitous, in its way, as the burning of the Mayan codices in Yucatán nearly 500 years ago. James Nations predicts future generations will look back at the eradication of millions of species in the world's forests as a "Great Dying," surpassed only by the disappearance of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. □

GOING FOR SUPERFUND GOLD

Revolving Door At the E.P.A.

JIM SIBBISON

Soon after William Ruckelshaus took over last fall as chair and chief executive officer of Browning-Ferris Industries of Houston, the giant waste disposal firm, he encountered one of his employees in an elevator. "She had a wide smile on her face as she entered our shared conveyance," he recalled in his first message to stockholders. "I asked her why she was so happy. She replied, 'Most people around here are happy.'" Ruckelshaus promised to try to keep the stockholders in a similar state of euphoria.

It seems likely that he will. His company enjoys annual revenues of $2 billion and net profits rose 31 percent last year. Ruckelshaus himself also has reason for contentment. When he resigned as head of the Environmental Protection Agency nearly five years ago his salary was $72,600 a year. Company papers filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission show that his guaranteed minimum annual pay is now $1 million. In addition, he is assured of far more than that in incentive bonuses and the exercise of options to buy up to 1 million shares of Browning-Ferris stock.

Ruckelshaus is just the best-known member of an expanding class of former E.P.A. professionals now employed in the booming waste disposal industry. Typically, they have gone to work for companies that are prospering from contracts with the agency's multibillion-dollar Superfund program to clean up hazardous dumps. According to a General Accounting Office survey in July 1987, one-third of the E.P.A.'s staff administering the Superfund program were looking for jobs with private contractors. In April 1988 a Congressional study found "no likely letup in high Superfund staff turnover at E.P.A."

For the men and women who land these private-sector jobs, the substantial pay raises are no doubt exhilarating. But the taxpayers and the environment don't fare as well. Congressional investigators have found that the handful of completed Superfund cleanups tend to be sloppy, makeshift, stretched out for maximum profit and prone to contaminate the environment again. They also have uncovered appalling waste and price gouging. While contractors may not be cleaning up many dumps, some of them have done an

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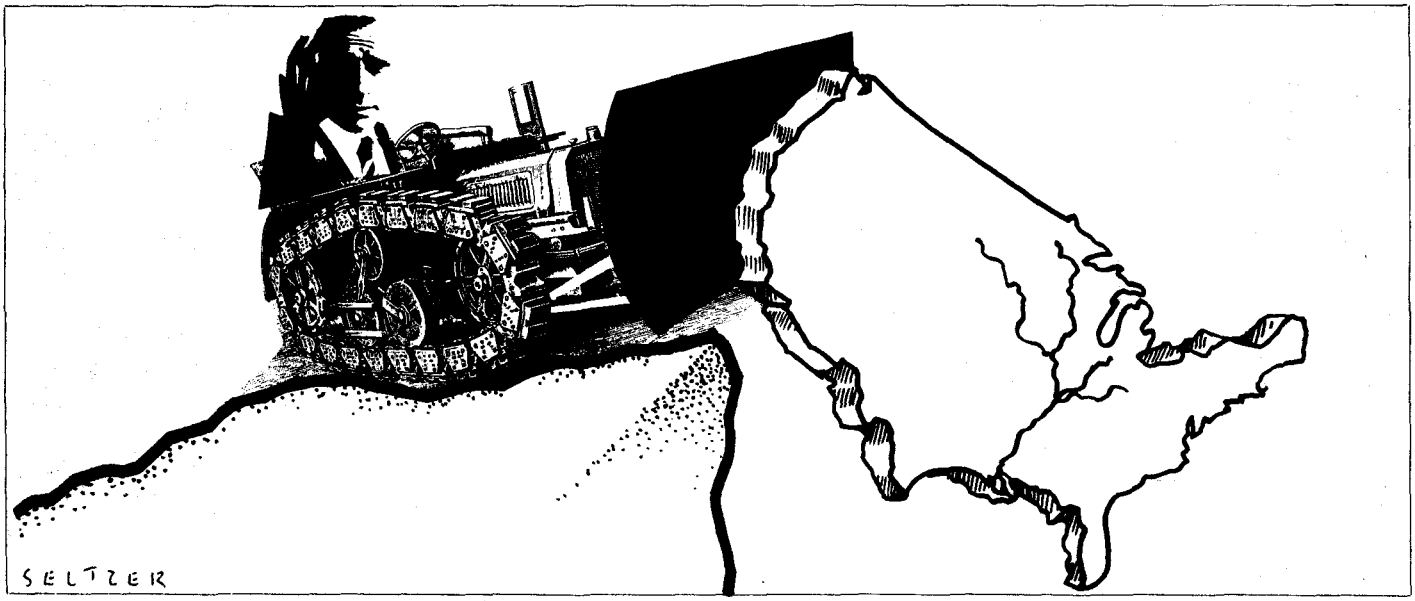
excellent job of taking the E.P.A. to the cleaners, as Senator Frank Lautenberg put it. It all adds up to a thriving new Washington institution: the E.P.A.'s own revolving door.

The star in this category is Ruckelshaus. In addition to his long E.P.A. experience, he has easy access to President George Bush, who looked to him for environmental policy advice during last fall's campaign. He has been a mentor to the current E.P.A. chief, William Reilly. At Browning-Ferris he provides a profile of moral rectitude to a company in frequent trouble as a price fixer and major polluter. Ruckelshaus earned his reputation for integrity during the infamous "Saturday Night Massacre," when he refused President Richard Nixon's order to dismiss special prosecutor Archibald Cox and was fired from his post as deputy attorney general. In his first stint as E.P.A. Administrator from 1970 to 1973, he won environmentalists' support for such decisions as a ban on most uses of the pesticide DDT and the establishment of tough air pollution standards. Recalled in 1973 to dispel the Anne Burford scandal—which involved conflicts of interest and sweetheart deals in the administration of the Superfund—he vowed to make the agency "adhere to an iron integrity." Soon he was asking citizens in Tacoma, Washington, to accept a cancer risk from smelter fumes or lose jobs when the smelter closed. Then he reneged on a promise to control acid rain. Among his few regulatory initiatives was a decision to relax an air pollution standard for soot, for which he was lobbied privately by then-Vice President Bush, who was intervening on behalf of Bethlehem Steel.

Since leaving the agency to make more money, Ruckelshaus has become a director of such regulated corporations as Instituform of North America (sewer and water pipeline construction), Cummins Engine (diesel engines for trucks) and Monsanto (pesticides and other chemicals). In addition, by 1987 Ruckelshaus was overseeing a coalition of Fortune 500 companies that sought to weaken the Superfund law. Two top lieutenants in this effort were Philip Angell, his former administrative aide at the E.P.A., and Henry Habicht, a former assistant attorney general with responsibilities for prosecuting Superfund violators. All three pulled out after the plan was leaked to the business press [see Viveca Novak, "Hazardous Choice," March 27]. Angell later became a Washington representative of Ruckelshaus's company, Browning-Ferris. In another spin of the revolving door, Habicht is now deputy administrator of the E.P.A.

Ruckelshaus heads a company where multimillion-dollar pollution fines are regarded as routine costs. Shortly before he took charge, Browning-Ferris was fined $2.5 million for contaminating the environment in Livingston, Louisiana. Less than a year later, the Supreme Court upheld a $6 million fine against his firm for predatory pricing in trying to run a competitor out of the garbage collection business in Burlington, Vermont. Browning-Ferris and its larger rival, Waste Management, of Oak Brook, Illinois, could technically be barred from E.P.A. contracts because they pleaded guilty in October 1987 to price fixing in the Toledo, Ohio, area. Bob Meunier, an E.P.A. official, said the sanction was not invoked, in part because the agency needs the companies to haul waste. In any case, Browning-Ferris seems to shrug off run-ins with the law. In papers filed last year with the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Ruckelshaus management confides: "In the normal course of doing business, all companies in the waste disposal industry will be faced with government enforcement proceedings and possible resulting fines and other sanctions. . . . Management of the company [Browning-Ferris] does not believe that such amounts, individually or in the aggregate, are likely to be materially adverse to the company's business."

Waste Management, the biggest disposal company of them all, also features former government officials, and even ex-environmental activists, in top positions. Many were brought in after the company's performance as a major polluter made headlines in 1983. In *The New York Times* Raymond Bonner and Ralph Blumenthal reported charges of widespread illegal dumping and unsavory business practices. Waste Management stock dropped 30 percent. Soon



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thereafter, two former E.P.A. executives found work with one of its subsidiaries, Chemical Waste Management, and S.E.C. papers show that Walter Barber, a onetime career civil servant who was acting agency chief before Anne Burford took over, drew a salary of $191,300 and a bonus of $67,300 as C.W.M.'s vice president in 1988. Joan Bernstein, a former E.P.A. general counsel in the Carter Administration, currently holds that job with C.W.M. She pulled down a healthy $170,400 with a bonus of $59,900.

Ironically, these former government officials have had little impact on Waste Management's many troubles in court. There has been no perceptible letup in bad publicity. In 1987 *The Wall Street Journal* said grand juries in six states were investigating the company, which is accused of price fixing and bid rigging. Last fall, the supervisor of garbage disposal in New Orleans, Cecil McFarland, told the City Council that unidentified Waste Management officials had warned him and a colleague they would wear "cement boots" and "meet their maker" if they persisted in investigating garbage disposal overcharges. A company spokesman disavowed the threats in an interview with the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*.

Most contractors enjoying Superfund prosperity, however, need not worry about unfavorable publicity. They thrive anonymously. Douglas Costle, President Jimmy Carter's E.P.A. chief, became a millionaire in five years as a Superfund pioneer, without any press notice at all. What brought Costle into the business was Ronald Reagan's victory over Carter in 1980. Costle was out of a job just as the new Superfund rules were generating a big industrial demand for test laboratories. He and three other senior E.P.A. officials displaced by the Republicans—Eckardt (Chris) Beck, Henry Beal and Swep Davis—founded a laboratory of their own, the Environmental Testing and Certification Corporation, which is based in Edison Township, New Jersey, near a big chemical industry complex. An E.P.A. laboratory was already operating in the town and provided the founders with a convenient source of technical personnel. They initially sold about 20 million shares of stock in the company, acquiring sizable blocks for themselves. In its first three years Costle's company lost money. But with a growing list of government and industry customers, by 1985 net profits came to $3.5 million on gross revenues of $16.5 million. On February 28, 1986, Costle's stock was worth $25 a share, giving him a holding worth $3.5 million. Davis owned 120,000 shares ($3 million), Beal owned 105,000 ($2.6 million) and Beck owned 100,000 ($2.5 million). About that time, they merged with O.H. Materials of Findlay, Ohio, another company prospering from E.P.A. business. Of the four former E.P.A. executives, only Davis stayed on. Costle is now dean of the Vermont School of Law.

The performance of these executives was impressive. But Superfund money has become even more plentiful in the last few years. The E.P.A. is currently committed to paying $3 billion for dump cleanups to just six environmental

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engineering firms: CH2M Hill of Denver ($829 million), Ebasco Services of New York City ($504 million), NUS Corp. of Gaithersburg, Maryland ($492 million), Camp Dresser & McKee of Boston ($409 million), Roy F. Weston of West Chester, Pennsylvania ($388 million) and Ecology and Environment of Buffalo ($364 million). Their profits have been astronomical. For example, Roy F. Weston's net income rose 970 percent from 1983 to 1987.

Even more serious, the E.P.A., while spending all this money, is turning control of the Superfund over to the contractors and consultants. A recent investigation headed by Senator David Pryor concluded that the disposal industries now constitute a "shadow government," in that the contractors help the E.P.A. to write regulations, lay down rules for enforcement, write reports to Congress under the agency's name, brief top agency officials on Superfund progress and even hold training sessions for agency employees on how to write and award contracts. When a consultant is in need of a contract, it is considered entirely acceptable to hire an employee at the agency who is familiar with the details. "Obviously, we do hire E.P.A. people, and for a while they do have knowledge of E.P.A.'s needs for contracting services," said Gary Dietrich, a former E.P.A. executive on the staff of a large consulting firm, ICF Inc. of Fairfax, Virginia. "I don't know whether that's bad." Investigators for Senator Pryor disagree. As they see it, E.P.A. personnel joining consultants and contractors under these conditions are, in effect, selling secret information. Their new employers, in turn, use this information to their advantage in winning contracts.

According to Senator Pryor, ICF has other conflicts of interest. In a brochure soliciting new customers, the company bragged that "we understand the framework of regulatory requirements and public involvement in which our clients operate." That is true, since with former E.P.A. officials on its staff, ICF helped the E.P.A. write the regulations. The company is thus in an excellent position to show a corporate client the loopholes. "Is it any wonder," asked Senator Pryor, "that ICF Inc., calls itself the fastest growing firm in the industry?"

With private contractors practically in charge of the Superfund and the most competent E.P.A. employees leaving to join them, the agency, not surprisingly, has been severely weakened. "Recent college graduates are in charge of multimillion-dollar projects," says Joel S. Hirschhorn, an authority on Superfund in the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment. "These junior people are expected to stand up to the pressures from the senior contract managers they are supposed to oversee."

One sign of E.P.A. incompetence showed up in a report by the agency's Inspector General, John Martin, who found the agency was paying grossly padded Superfund bills. A review of invoices showed that the E.P.A. in one case paid $20,000 for security guards that cost one contractor $8,000. "For labor costs," he told a hearing conducted by Senator Lautenberg on April 29, 1987, "we found markups averaged

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40 percent." Another contractor paid $500 for a trash pump, billed the E.P.A. for $4,000 and then was ready to rent it. A third leased a pickup truck for $16 a day and charged the agency $58 a day. This past February Senator Pryor found the E.P.A. was spending tens of millions of dollars on work by consultants that the agency's employees should have been doing. The agency paid ICF $260,000 for writing a report on Superfund, replaced the ICF letterhead with its own and submitted it to Congress. The E.P.A. paid the consulting firm Booz, Allen and Hamilton $90,000 for a video program it never made. It was not uncommon for the E.P.A. to pay up to 500 percent more than a private client would for studies and cleanup of a hazardous dump.

The principal victims of this relationship between the E.P.A. and industry are the millions of people who live near the toxic waste dumps. The cleanups that satisfy the agency aren't nearly good enough for the local residents, and they often can't do a thing about it. The agency frequently calls upon an organization called Clean Sites to serve as an informal mediator to help settle cleanup disputes. According to Lois Gibbs, executive director of Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes, activists from her organization are excluded from all Clean Sites mediations with the E.P.A. and industry. Clean Sites touts itself as an "unbiased third party," but its largest corporate donors, giving $100,000 or more, are Dow Chemical, Du Pont, Monsanto, Shell Oil, General Electric and Union Carbide. The people who have been in charge at the E.P.A., however, unfailingly praise Clean Sites. They have even set aside Superfund money to insure the organization against costly lawsuits. William Reilly was a founder. Russell Train, E.P.A. Administrator in the Nixon and Ford Administrations, is chair of Clean Sites.

Such mutual cordiality pervades the relationship between E.P.A. regulators and the corporations. It is bound to continue, too, as long as the law allows Ruckelshaus, Costle, Habicht and the others to take big jobs at the agency and exploit their experience for private gain when they leave. Like the former officials at Defense or Housing and Urban Development, they have an inherent conflict of interest.

That was the issue when the first Superfund scandal forced Anne Burford and her staff out of office at the agency in 1983. It is still the issue, except that the somnolent Washington press corps doesn't know about it. Actually, the opportunities for getting rich on public funds are far greater than they were in Burford's time. The E.P.A. is currently going through $8.5 billion in Superfund money, and the Office of Technology Assessment estimates it will take fifty years more at a cost of $500 billion to finish the cleanup job. This is a considerable amount of cash to place in the eager hands of Superfund contractors, consultants and their friends at the agency. Misgivings about where all this is heading are already being expressed at the agency itself. "Superfund," says the E.P.A.'s John Martin, "is particularly sensitive to fraud, waste and abuse." It would be unrealistic to expect Martin's boss, William Reilly, to deal with this misconduct, since Reilly advocates collaboration between the E.P.A. and industry. It is up to Congress to call the E.P.A. to account. □

SCENES FROM THE PLAY

Mastergate—the Scandal Continues

Mastergate *(rhymes with "Watergate") is the title of a devilishly satirical play by Larry Gelbart which opened on October 12 at the Criterion Theater on Broadway. The plot is too complicated to summarize here with a straight face—like the Iran/*contra *scandal that inspired it. Suffice it to say that a lot of high-level governmental, political and patriotic types are on view, and they say a lot of outrageously funny things (though contrary to rumor none of the dialogue is taken from actual Congressional hearings). Herewith two excerpts from* Mastergate. *In the first scene Secretary of State Bishop is badgered by Senator Knight; in the second, Maj. Manley Battle, a war hero, is coddled by Senator Bunting.*

LARRY GELBART

KNIGHT: Mr. Secretary, some six months to half a year ago you were questioned by the subcommittee of this committee. Do you recall your appearance at that particular time?

BISHOP: I believe I looked pretty much as I do now.

KNIGHT: Do you remember our discussing the Mastergate situation at that particular frame in time?

BISHOP: Senator, we discussed a great many subjects, as I may or may not recall. If you could possibly reload your question, sir?

KNIGHT: You testified then that you were categorically opposed to the entire Mastergate idea, and yet, subsequently and prior, and all the times in between, you did all that you could to make the plan succeed. Wouldn't you say that that was sending out a somewhat scrambled signal, sir?

BISHOP: Not at all. Since everyone knew I was against the plan, I assumed everyone would know that I was against whatever it was I was doing.

KNIGHT: Forgive me, sir, but how could you hope to convince anyone that you were opposed to something you were so busy supporting?

BISHOP: By resigning as often as I could—without actually damaging my effectiveness on the job.

KNIGHT: The job of implementing policies you had no particular faith in?

BISHOP: The Secretary of State doesn't spend his time just attending state funerals and going to poison gas con-

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Larry Gelbart, author of A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum *and other plays, and producer of the* M*A*S*H *television series, has written for radio, television and film.* *Copyright © 1988 Larry Gelbart. All rights reserved.*

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ferences. It's not all fun and games, you know.

KNIGHT: It didn't trouble you, all the carrying on that was going on?

BISHOP: Senator, at the very onslaught to all this, I issued a strict appeal that I was to remain completely uninformed as much as possible about this whole operation, so that I could maintain a perfectly honest front about what was going on behind my back.

KNIGHT: And just how did you put your ignorance into action?

BISHOP: I was content to let the Director of Central Intelligence, Mr. Slaughter, make whatever arrangements were being made with the person with whom he was making them with.

KNIGHT: And with whom would that person have been?

BISHOP: Vice President Burden. (*This news causes quite a stir.*) Before you jump to any conclusions, I hasten to add that the Vice President personally assured me that even though he approved of these arrangements, he can prove he knew nothing about them, since he was in the room at the time they were made.

KNIGHT: Would you say that the Vice President was there in the capacity of acting for the President?

BISHOP: The President needs no help with his acting, sir.

KNIGHT: Would it be your opinion that the President knew that the Vice President knew?

BISHOP: Knew what?

KNIGHT: Everything that he didn't know.

BISHOP: No one else was in a position not to know as much as the President didn't.

* * *

BUNTING: I wonder if I might ask you to use the map we have here for the purpose of your using it, Major. If I could just ask my niece and nephew to roll it out, please?

BATTLE: Yes, sir. (*Two of the pages roll out the map. Battle walks up to it and picks up a wooden pointer, as the flashbulbs begin popping. After a bit of discreet posing:*) San Elvador lies just right of center here in Central America. It has a democratic form of government that has been run by its army for the past forty years. It is passionately anti-Communist, with a vigorous opposition press, a strong, vocal church and free elections that are promised regularly. But most geopolitically significant, there is San Elvador's unmistakable proximity-ship to its immediate neighbor to the far left, Ambigua.

BUNTING: Ambigua is totalitarily Lenin-Marxist in your opinion, Major?

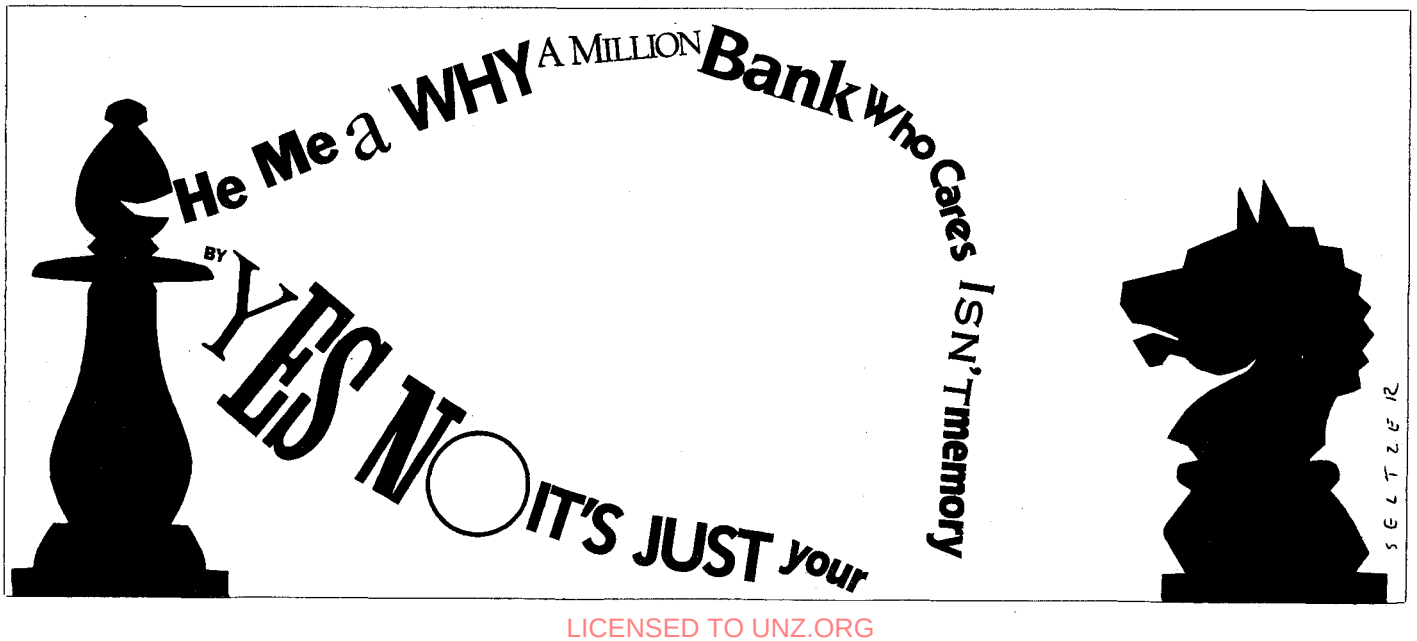
BATTLE: It's as Red as the ace of hearts, sir. The whole nine yardski.

BUNTING: And completely controlled by Moscow?

BATTLE: Does the Pope ride an encyclical? (*Crowd laughs.*) Not that I mean to make light of the Communist menace. Or the Catholics, either.

BUNTING: Major, I'm sure that this committee, as well as the country for which we stand, would be most appreciative for you to share some of your daylight with us on that sad and benighted land.

BATTLE: Yes, sir. The Republic of Ambigua, or La Republica de Ambigua, is yet another betrayed revolution in which a legitimate set of high ideals were once more cruelly twisted and cynically Sovietized. The United States has had a long period of the most intimate relations with the Ambiguan government, the last eighteen of Ambigua's presidents being West Point graduates. But a coup occurred and the reins of power changed hands three years ago when the former President of Ambigua, General Delinqua, and the country's Prime Minister, Mrs. Delinqua, were in New York on an emergency shopping trip, at which point the government was taken over by Dr. Overtega, a former podiatrist, and his band of foot soldiers. Within days, Ambigua became a Red Sea. Overnight, a landing strip was built to accommodate the most advanced Soviet bombers: planes so



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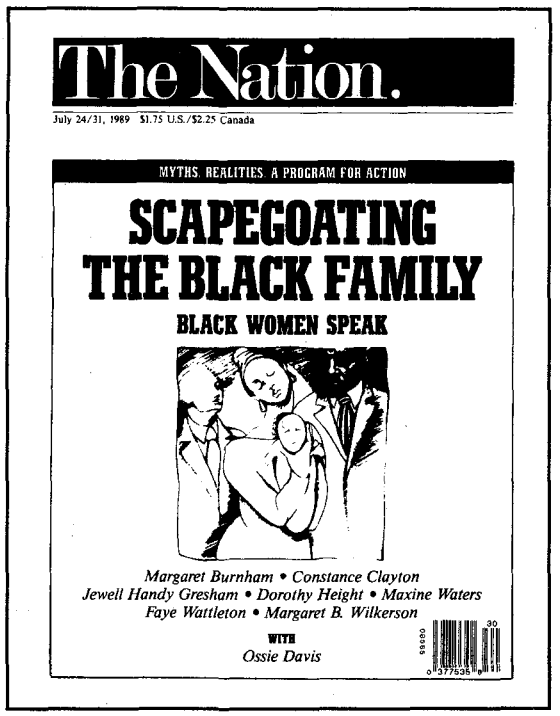
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fast a Russian pilot could have a burrito in Ambigua and wash it down with a bowl of borscht in Lenin's tomb. Soviet adviseniks armed the Elvadorians with vast quantities of automatic Baryshnikovs, ground-to-air rockets and heat-seeking machetes. But most provocatively, and least acceptably, they dug underground nucular missile silos below *our* underground nucular missile silos so that we were in danger of being the first military force in history to ever be attacked simultaneously from behind *and* from below. □

Newspapers

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

vation Act into a two-stop ticket from full competition to full monopoly.

In 1969 the Nixon Administration's antitrust chief, the late Richard McLaren, came out against the newspaper preservation bill. But Richard Berlin, then the president of the Hearst Corporation, wrote Nixon that Hearst and "many other important publishers and friends of your Administration" wanted the bill passed. The Administration promptly reversed itself and the bill became law. As Ben Bagdikian points out in *The Media Monopoly*, in the 1972 election Nixon enjoyed "the highest percentage of newspaper endorsements of any candidate in modern times," including support by every paper in the Hearst, Cox and Scripps-Howard chains, who were chief beneficiaries of the act.

While the act's main goal was to legalize the twenty-two J.O.A.s that already existed—in the face of a Supreme Court decision dooming them—Congress also added a proviso allowing creation of new J.O.A.s if approved by the Attorney General. Since then they have been set up in Anchorage, Cincinnati, Chattanooga and Seattle, each time with the Attorney General's blessing of one of the papers as "in probable danger of financial failure."

Foreshadowing Detroit, the claimed "failures" in those cases suggested a pattern of self-defeat. In Cincinnati, for example, Scripps-Howard's *Post* in 1977 failed to match a circulation price hike by the *Enquirer* for the first time since the 1950s. An administrative law judge found that matching the *Enquirer* this time would have added more than $1 million to the *Post*'s yearly revenues, about enough to wipe out the loss on which its "failing" status depended. Nevertheless, the judge recommended approval, the antitrust division of the Justice Department went along and so did the Carter Administration's Attorney General, Benjamin Civiletti.

The Detroit deal, if permitted, would give failure a new and terminal meaning. The *News* is owned by Gannett, the *Free Press* by Knight-Ridder, respectively the largest and second-largest newspaper chains in the country, with combined 1988 profits of more $520 million. The *News* and *Free Press* are the ninth- and tenth-largest dailies in the United States, and Detroit is the fifth-largest market, more

Stephen R. Barnett is a professor of law at the University of California, Berkeley.

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than twice the size of Seattle or Cincinnati.

No less unprecedented is the nature of the claimed failure in Detroit. The two papers are competitive equals. Attorney General Edwin Meese 3d, who approved the J.O.A., conceded that the papers had battled through the 1980s "without either moving toward a position of market dominance." In fact, Gannett and Knight-Ridder negotiated over *which* paper they would call "failing."

The *Free Press* bases its claim to failure on pre-tax losses of some $70 million from 1980 to 1987. But the *News* lost almost as much. Why? Although both papers had been profitable through the 1970s, in 1979 they started a price war, giving Detroit about the lowest circulation and advertising rates in the nation. The *News* now sells on the street for 15 cents and the *Free Press* for 20 cents, while almost all other U.S. dailies cost 25 cents or more.

The decision to roll back prices and take big losses was made, on both sides, with a J.O.A. in view. Before Gannett offered to buy the *News* in 1985 from Peter Clark of the Evening News Association, Gannett chair Allen Neuharth checked with Knight-Ridder about a J.O.A. and got the go-ahead. One memorandum showed Gannett and Knight-Ridder discussing their "economic window of opportunity" and worrying that "if both papers become marginally profitable, no J.O.A."

A J.O.A. is well worth the losses. Newspaper analyst John Morton has estimated that combined annual profits in Detroit, which are to be split 50-50 after five years, would reach $177 million by that time. This means the two media giants would make enough in one year to recoup the decade of losses it took to achieve their togetherness. And under the 100-year term of the J.O.A. they'd have ninety-four years of such profits to come.

In December 1987, after hearing all the evidence, Morton Needelman, an administrative law judge, saw no real failure. Both papers were seeking market dominance and taking big losses, he wrote, "in the belief that failure too had its reward." Take away that reward, he reasoned, and both papers would have to rethink their strategies or face unending losses. Needelman recommended that Meese deny the J.O.A., as did the antitrust division.

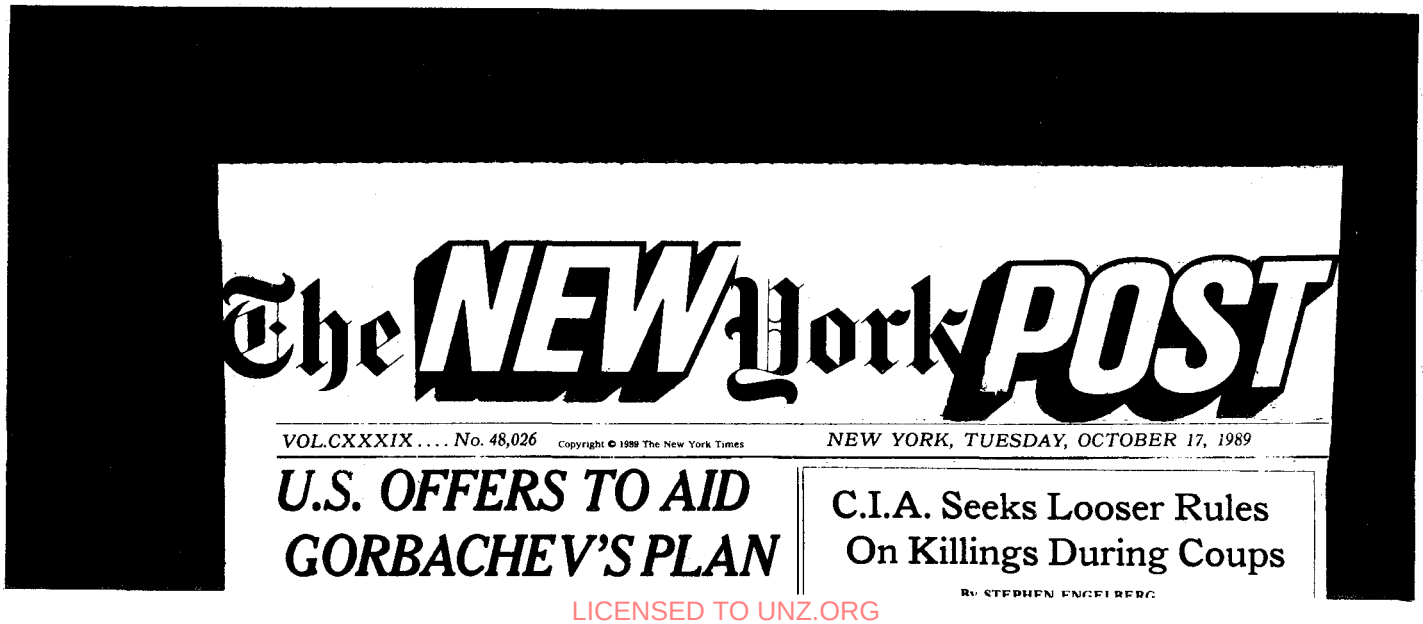
Panicked, Knight-Ridder hired Washington lobbyist William Timmons and influential lawyer Clark Clifford. The company's board convened in Detroit with much media fanfare and portentously voted to close the *Free Press* unless Meese approved the J.O.A. (Knight-Ridder president James Batten called top editors at other chains and asked them to cover the event, which many papers did.)

With its gun to the *Free Press*'s head, Knight-Ridder set about scaring off opponents and dragooning supporters. David Lawrence, the paper's publisher, worked the masses. He filled a third of a Sunday front page with a lachrymose column urging readers to write and tell him what they would miss most about the *Free Press*. Then he printed scores of the pandered responses.

Lawrence and Alvah Chapman, Knight-Ridder's chair, together went after the elite. They compiled a list of more than 200 labor, political and civic leaders, and Lawrence dunned these newsmakers for letters supporting the J.O.A. Nothing was promised in return, of course; it did not have to be. In came letters backing the merger from dozens of the heavy hitters, and *Free Press* lawyers unblushingly forwarded them to Meese with their legal brief.

Meanwhile, the *Free Press* killed editorial cartoons and toned down editorials critical of Meese in his stewardship of the Justice Department and his role in the Iran/*contra* scandal. Knight-Ridder's flagship paper, *The Miami Herald*, pitched in by telling its editorial cartoonist to lay off the Attorney General. A few days before leaving office, in August 1988, Meese rejected Needelman's recommendation and approved the J.O.A. Meese conceded that Detroit could sustain two profitable papers, if only they charged higher circulation and advertising prices than the *News* and *Free Press* had been doing. But the *Free Press* was failing, he ruled, because its losses could not be reversed "unilaterally," and because the *News* was ahead in the market and "committed" to continuing its below normal pricing.

The rejoicing in the executive suites at Gannett and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U.S. OFFERS TO AID GORBACHEV'S PLAN

C.I.A. Seeks Looser Rules On Killings During Coups

By STEPHEN ENGELBERG

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Knight-Ridder was short-lived. A quickly organized group called Michigan Citizens for an Independent Press challenged Meese's ruling and won a series of stays blocking the J.O.A. But this past January the group lost in the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington. Judge Laurence Silberman cautioned against putting "undue stress on self-serving declarations by newspaper publishers seeking a J.O.A." and then gave those declarations undue stress. He said Meese was justified in believing Neuharth's vow to keep the *News* hemorrhaging and Chapman's vow to close the *Free Press* because their statements "follow a long period of bitter competition."

In February the Court of Appeals voted 5 to 4 against rehearing the case, and Michigan Citizens took it to the Supreme Court. The briefs filed for the October 30 arguments pose essentially two questions: How much deference should reviewing courts give to Meese's decision? And given the facts in Detroit, was Meese's decision reasonable and consistent with the Newspaper Preservation Act?

For publishers in the two dozen cities that still have competing dailies, approval of the Detroit J.O.A. would provide a road map to monopoly. One paper need only slash its prices and take several years of losses. The other paper must follow suit, and then neither can "unilaterally" stop its losses. So the paper that trails is "failing," according to the Meese-Silberman test. For good measure, the boss of the non-failing paper swears that if denied the J.O.A. he'll never raise his prices until the other paper crumbles, and the boss of the "failing" paper vows to fold it by sundown. The Attorney General believes them both, and the owners cash in their losses for 100 years of unbridled profits.

The Detroit scenario is replaying first in Little Rock, one of the remaining two-paper towns. In 1986 the ubiquitous Gannett bought the *Arkansas Gazette* and promptly declared war on the *Arkansas Democrat*, slashing the *Gazette's* rates and turning its profits into losses of about $10 million a year. Six days after Meese's Detroit ruling—and two days before the Michigan Citizens filed their unexpected lawsuit—Gannett turned up the heat, cutting the *Gazette*'s subscription price another 57.5 percent. The *Democrat*'s publisher has filed an amicus curiae brief in the Detroit case. He claims Gannett is trying to force him either out of business or into a J.O.A., and that this is where the Detroit plot leads.

In turn, J.O.A.s lead to single-paper monopolies. This last act was premiered in St. Louis, where Pulitzer's *Post-Dispatch* and Newhouse's *Globe-Democrat* had had a J.O.A. since the 1960s. In 1983 Newhouse, the largest privately held media company in the United States and one awash in profits, announced that the *Globe-Democrat* was losing money and would close. This meant few tears for Newhouse, which would continue under the J.O.A. to share the enlarged profits of the *Post-Dispatch*.

The antitrust division stepped in, though, and ordered Newhouse to try to sell the *Globe-Democrat*. There wasn't much to sell (the J.O.A. had stripped the paper of its production and business operations), but four buyers nonetheless came forward. Newhouse chose *Saturday Review* publisher Jeffrey Gluck, quite possibly because he seemed most likely to fail, which he did. The *Globe-Democrat* expired in 1986, leaving Pulitzer and Newhouse with their one-paper monopoly after all. (Last month, however, the Ingersoll chain challenged the *Post-Dispatch*—and woke it up—by launching the *St. Louis Sun*.)

Next came Miami. There the *News*, owned by the Cox chain, and the *Herald*, owned by Knight-Ridder, had formed a J.O.A. in 1966. Last October they announced that Cox would fold the *News* on December 31, getting in return a share of the *Herald*'s profits until 2021. The antitrust division played a role this time too, but a different one.

In St. Louis antitrust chief William Baxter not only had ordered Newhouse to put the *Globe-Democrat* on the block but had policed the sale to prevent Newhouse from rejecting a qualified buyer (though not, unfortunately, from choosing the weakest buyer). Since Baxter's effort ultimately failed, the lesson of St. Louis was that the antitrust division should do more. In particular, it should require that a J.O.A. paper be offered for sale not as a skeleton without its production and business operations but together with its share in the J.O.A.

Instead of doing more in Miami, the antitrust division, then headed by Charles Rule, barely stirred. When Cox announced last October that it would kill the *News*, Rule did nothing to oversee the company's effort to sell the paper. He waited until December 23 to open a preliminary investigation. He waited until December 30 to announce that he was looking into "how vigorous a search was made for potential buyers by Cox" and "how seriously negotiations were conducted once a potential buyer was found." On December 31 Cox closed the *News*.

Whether or not competition can be revived after monopoly has set in, as Ingersoll is trying to do in St. Louis, it can be saved where it still exists. If the Supreme Court denies approval for the Detroit J.O.A., there's no reason that Knight-Ridder could not either run the *Free Press* competitively or sell it to someone who would. Even after three years as a "failing" newspaper, the *Free Press* this year was trumpeting in full-page ads—until they were quoted in a Supreme Court brief—that it has "outgained the *News* in the metro area—two-to-one daily and by an even greater margin on Sunday during the past six months."

On the other hand, if the Supreme Court permits the Detroit J.O.A. the meaning of "newspaper preservation" will be settled. Publishers will have a clear field to mop up the remaining competition between daily papers in U.S. cities. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

The Lenore Marshall/*Nation* Poetry Prize–1989

*The Lenore Marshall/*Nation *Poetry Prize of $10,000, awarded annually for the most outstanding book of poems published in the United States by an American, is sponsored by the New Hope Foundation in conjunction with* The Nation. *Previous winners of the prize have been Josephine Jacobsen (1988), Donald Hall (1987), Howard Moss (1986), John Ashbery (1985), Josephine Miles (1984), George Starbuck (1983), John Logan (1982), Sterling A. Brown (1981), Stanley Kunitz (1980), Hayden Carruth (1979), Allen Tate (1978), Philip Levine (1977), Denise Levertov (1976) and Cid Corman (1975).*

This year the prize has been awarded to Thomas McGrath for his book Selected Poems: 1938–1988 *(Copper Canyon Press). The judges were Richard Kenney, Robert Shaw and Amy Clampitt, who has contributed the accompanying essay.*

Thomas McGrath was born in 1916 and grew up on a farm in North Dakota, where he experienced the stirrings of a grass-roots left wing at first hand. He graduated from the state university, won a Rhodes scholarship and became a member of the Communist Party. This was no passing flirtation. When the House Un-American Activities Committee caught up with him in 1953, he refused to testify, lost his teaching job at Los Angeles State College and for the next decade made the marginal living of a blacklisted academic. He had been writing poetry since his student days, and at some time in the 1950s he began a long poem, "Letter to an Imaginary Friend," which by 1984—when he pronounced it complete—had grown to epic length. Though his gifts had not gone unrecognized (he received a number of grants, including a Guggenheim fellowship), the kind of critical attention that makes for literary celebrity had not come his way.

Some readers coming upon the *Selected Poems: 1938–1988* may indeed wonder why. For a sober and temperate effort to provide an answer, I am indebted to Frederick Stern's collection of essays, *The Revolutionary Poet in the United States*, which came to my attention after the judges for this year's Lenore Marshall/*Nation* Poetry Prize had made their choice. That choice was unanimous, and was arrived at without prolonged difficulty once we had resigned ourselves to the agony of having to choose at all among so many works of distinction, freshness or endearingly outright outlandishness, if not all three.

Such are the vagaries of publishing, reviewing and literary inattention that I had not so much as laid eyes on any part of the "Letter to an Imaginary Friend." Repairing that omission, I found it to be by turns fierce, somber, rollicking and outrageous—a simmering *olla podrida* of an epic, from which there is the urge at moments, perhaps, to turn away. Only one doesn't, much as one can't tear oneself away from a party that is getting out of hand.

The *Selected Poems: 1938–1988* is by comparison sedate, though it has its extravagances. Sam Hamill's introduction may mislead you into supposing that the "Letter" is not represented in it. Happily, there is in fact some overlap. On the other hand, a number of the poems are perfectly autonomous, and no bigger than a haiku:

> The long wound of the summer—
> Stitched
> by cicadas

is an example. It remains true, as it was true of Wordsworth, say, or Whitman, that the poems do leave one with the sense of something single, however large, loose, fragmentary and indeed at times unruly. Though a fondness for the well-turned stanza is evident throughout, the poetry seems most at home in a discursive cadence that settles naturally into a six-beat line.

If from all this one assumes there is an affinity with Whitman, or with Sandburg, that assumption is soon confounded: To begin with, at least, McGrath has said he didn't much care for either one. Among early likes he has mentioned Conrad Aiken, Robinson Jeffers and—yes—Hart Crane. When it comes to outright borrowing—from Eliot, Blake, Keats, Yeats, Stevens, Marvell, Donne, Rilke, St. Francis—he is unabashed. The strongest unacknowledged influence would seem to be that of W.H. Auden. The adjectives, the alliteration, the feeling for topography are all at any rate to be found in an early poem such as "Up the Dark Valley." Reticence, economy and neatness on the page are also to be found in such later poems as the balladlike "Remembering the Children of Auschwitz":

> And all seemed perfectly proper:
> The little house was covered
> With barbwire and marzipan;
> And the Witch was there; and the Oven.

Imitation conscious or unconscious, pastiche, the trying on of masks, may turn out to be the refuge of whoever grows up alienated. It was true of Eliot, born in St. Louis, and of Pound, born in Hailey, Idaho. Between them they reinvented poetry as a thing of rags and patches. If the *Selected Poems* of Thomas McGrath contains its share of pastiche, of borrowings and unconscious echoes, no one should be surprised. The very title of his "Letter to an Imaginary Friend" is symptomatic of the degree of his own isolation:

> Stood in the north Forty,
> With no tradition to warm me,
> demanding a name,

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Needing a word for the Now . . .

Exile begins early in my country
Though the commune of gentle wood
choppers be never so wide and
warm.

In the absence of any native tradition, there may be a trying on of masks and manners, but also a recklessness as all these are flung aside, and what opens is a welter of possibilities:

And the Pheasant leaped out of the
tenement of the corn like a burglar
taken
In flagrante delicto with a cry like an
angry bedspring
(Part silver, part bronze, part wind
chime and part pure galvanized
iron:
A gateless gate opening on hinges
never been oiled
By a single Koan)—*leaped!* showing
his colors, those jewels
Blazing around his neck, in a hellish
and helicopterish
Blur and burr of feathers: indignant
bandido and banshee!

This, from Part Three of the "Letter," does not appear in the *Selected Poems*, though there are other passages from it that do recur there: "Praises," a succulent catalogue of vegetable "modes and virtues," is one. How, it may be asked, can such exuberance consort with the ire of a lifelong Marxist? Uneasily: That much may perhaps be said, though in the end the ire is not merely polemical but is fed by the same deep sources as the poetry itself.

One of those sources, for the poet in question, is the experience of work. No poet since Whitman, I think, has written so obsessively of physical labor as McGrath—though in an altered and more elegiac tone:

The bunched cooperative labor of
poor stiffs in the cold.
All dead now: that kind of working.
Only
The trees the same: cottonwood,
chokeberry; elm; ash;
Oak and box elder.
Every man on his own.
It's here
Someplace
all went wrong.
For work alone is play
Or slavery.
Went wrong somewhere.

The ire, Marxist or no, that can issue in such sorrow is part of the poet's calling—to brace and bring to its senses what the times have all but narcotized.

AMY CLAMPITT

UP THE DARK VALLEY

After the lean road looping the narrow river,
At a break in the valley, turned northward up the coulee,
Past the slow shallows where minnows, a tin flash
Patterned the trellised shadow. Then, leaving behind the last trees,
The spider sun laid on the hot face a tight miraculous web.

Northward then. All afternoon beneath my feet the ground gave
Uneven going. The colorless silence, unraveled by the flies,
Stitched again by the locusts, was heard, was smelled—
Swamp-smell, dead coulee water.
And the easy hills,
Burnt brown, green, grass color, went on through the afternoon,
Then blue-gray in the blue shadow. The path went on.
Darkness hid in the draws. I was soon surrounded.
Only the wind sound now. All through the evening.
Homeward I walk, hearing no human sound.

The birds of darkness sang back every call.

AFTERNOON OF A McGRATH

For my son Tomasito McGrath
after a visit to McGrath, Minnesota
(Aitken County)
early winter '74-'75

This morning there was one McGrath in Aitken County.
Now
There are three: the town, Tomasito, and myself.
And at this rate of growth
The County will remain alive at least ten minutes longer,
Though the town is disappearing: fast: in a thickening snow:
Which is also the snow of time, the secret invisible snow
That falls in summer and falls in the fall and in spring: the snow
We are all disappearing into—all but Tomasito
Who has found a god-dog to mush home with if he knew where that was.

This town, which carries our name into the rising night,
Is one of those lost places in which I have found myself
Often . . . though they always had other names—and sometimes I did.
What could I expect to find in a place where the lakes hold only
Private water? A walk or a wake away from the Dead
Sea of Mille Lacs where all class-struggle is ethnic?
Place
Where each grave plot is bespoke and the loudest talk is on tombstones?
Did I think to push open a gate and enter a century of sleep
Where only myself is awake? But that's just the world I live in
Outside the township limits . . .
Perhaps I expected to find
Death McGrath, that stranger I meet so often in dreams,
The one I thought was myself disguised in the drag of death?
Perhaps he is one of these Indians, now in full retreat
(With their white comrades) from the shots and the double shots of General Alcohol?
But it's not the bargirl, inside whose head
It is snowing, as it snows in mine, and behind whose eyes I see
The slow turn to the left of those permanent low-pressure systems . . .
And that's McGrath. I will never forget it, now, Tomasito—
Our ghosts are here forever now because you were here
With this snow and this bar and that dog—see: what you have invented!
And so I will put this poem under a stone somewhere
On a road I will never walk on again, as I have done
Another time.

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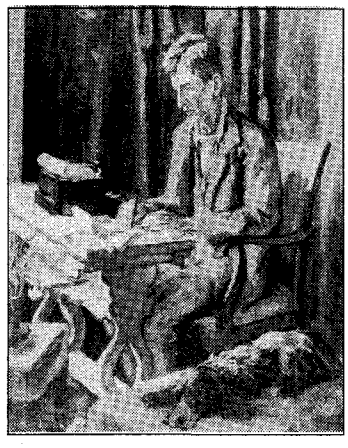
LETTERS OF
LEONARD
WOOLF



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Or put it with our hidden wishing stone
To remember us by "forever": now: as the town disappears
Into the blizzard . . .
and all the McGraths drift into
That snow, that permanent white where all our colors fade.

The night is closing down. But I'd like McGrath to continue
Beyond this winter and those to come—though THAT beyond
Is beyond all hope.
So let me stop: here: then . . .
—drifting

Into the universe and past all stars: toward those
Dark holes in space I must recognize as home.

MEDITERRANEAN

1.
I passed you many times as I went down the cliff walk,
Little Olivetree, all stunted and stiffened, as you climbed
From the blue cove where the cold sea comes in and dies.

I never saw you. My eyes were fixed: stunned
By the brutal light dancing in the fields of the insane blue.
The entrancing sea—indeed! I crowhopped and balked at seeing—

At seeing you, Comrade Olive. I had too much seaing.
And what were you pointing to or away from—your arthritic hands
Pinned in their tattered gray-green gloves, the fineries of former days?

2.
But finally I had to see you: old, fruitless, lame.
Were you climbing toward fire to bake the bread of the drowned
fisherman's widow?
Or be crosscut to bed the village lovers fucking themselves insane

And back again while peasants, donkeys, women and kids
Listening applauded, sniggered or looked unappeasably sad?
Was it for this you shook all night in the cold salt fogs of the sea?

I don't understand you—thanks be to all gods, goddesses and godlets!
You are not human—and thanks be again for *that*!
You are just *there*—unnoticed except for scent-posting dogs

Who piss on your gnarly roots each morning and twice on Sunday.
Relentless as the sea that rages daily in the shattered light—
Old guerrilla: charging slow motion to take high ground!

You seem to want to be helpful to those up there in the village . . .
Ergo my fancy of fire—your sacrificial death.
Such fancies can breed theologies; baroque and green as pond-scum.

3.
Nothing like bad Greek beer to clear the weary mind!
It seems, Comrade Olive, that you have got where we all
Will get. And I salute you, old fellow-traveler!

I halt, take a spray of your leaves and stride to a bar at the cove.
The sky is blessing the sea and the sea is blessing the sky!
Ho hum. Sycophants. Mutually co-admiring. But the beer is cold.

And I love this spray of olive leaves: gray and crazing
With frosty filigree of salt. I suck them. And the beer tastes fine.
So there is a grace from the halt by the tree; though not amazing.
May be: best thing: endure: face front: get back on the line.

From: Selected Poems: 1938–1988 *(Copper Canyon Press, P.O. Box 271, Port Townsend, WA 98368). Copyright © 1988 by Thomas McGrath.*

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Teach-by-Number Schools

HERBERT KOHL

AMONG SCHOOLCHILDREN. *By Tracy Kidder. Houghton Mifflin. 340 pp. $19.95.*

WOMEN TEACHING FOR CHANGE: Gender, Class and Power. *By Kathleen Weiler. Bergin and Garvey. 174 pp. $34.95. Paper $12.95.*

In 1950 I had a junior-high English teacher who had also been my father's English teacher in 1923. Our memories of her are similar. Mrs. Reilly (there was never any question of students knowing, much less using, her given name) had the reputation of being a teacher of the "old school." She was strict but eminently fair and a stickler for homework and neatness. She was noted for picking a few favorite children and holding them up to the rest of us as examples of excellence; those of us who couldn't keep up with her relentless pace felt guilty. And though she regularly failed people who didn't meet her standards, she could be funny and gentle in her own wry way, and almost always had the class under control. The few students who slipped out of her control didn't remain with us very long.

I thought of Mrs. Reilly for the first time in many years when reading about Chris Zajac, the central figure in Tracy Kidder's *Among Schoolchildren.* Zajac teaches fifth grade at Kelly Elementary School in Holyoke, Massachusetts. We meet her at the beginning of the school year as she tells her students, "You don't hand in junk to Mrs. Zajac. She's been teaching an awful lot of years. She didn't fall off the turnip cart yesterday. She told you she was an old-lady teacher." It could have been Mrs. Reilly addressing my father's class or mine, warning us to stay in line. I know Reilly didn't change her act a bit during the twenty-seven years between my father and me, and it was no surprise to find out that Mrs. Zajac, another "old-lady teacher," was only 34.

Kidder spent a year observing in Zajac's classroom, and his descriptions of life there ring true. Zajac's is one of the prevalent modes of teaching in public schools throughout the United States. It has certain characteristics that distinguish it from more open ways of relating to children on the one hand, and to colder, more "clinical" modes on the other. The first characteristic is a deep desire to see all the students succeed at the tasks set before them. Zajac is truly wounded by the fact that so many of them fail to come up to her standards, and blames that failure on their families' poverty. A second characteristic of her teaching is the inability to go beyond the curriculum and methods she is accustomed to using even when those don't work. For her the set curriculum is scripture—students either produce what it demands of them or fail. This means, for example, that everyone must do all the workbook exercises even if a good percentage of the class doesn't learn anything from them. It means moving on from lesson to lesson and dragging the students who have failed right along with the rest of the group. It means facing, as the year unfolds, growing inequalities in performance and persisting failure.

Chris Zajac is not the only one in the school who raises no questions. Her principal, Al, is portrayed as a genial if not too bright administrator whose job is to protect the teachers from outsiders and angry parents. Thinking about education is nobody's job at Kelly School. As a result, Zajac, despite her best instincts, blames school failure on poverty, irresponsible parents and badly raised children. She has an uncritical attitude toward her own work and does not seem to have heard that there are many routes to learning.

Kidder's well-crafted narrative of Zajac's life in the classroom moves briskly along from scene to scene, uncluttered by commentary on educational or social theory. I wanted to know what Chris Zajac thought about how children learn and to discover her educational ideas. The closest I could get to her thinking about education was revealed in Kidder's description of what happened when Zajac turned her class over to Pam, a student teacher, for three days:

> Chris went to the sofa. In a moment, she arose and sneaked up to the door of Room 205. She peeked through the gun-slit window. "Oh, good. Pam just threw down the book. I wish I could hear what she's saying. I told her to get right up to Robert's face with her teacher finger."
>
> . . .
>
> Afterward, Pam told Chris that the class behaved well after she slammed down the book and let Clarence have it. Pam said she felt better. She said that she believed that the class had been waiting for her to do that, and that they felt better too.

"She's learning," said Chris after school that day.

Among Schoolchildren is a sad book. Zajac is trapped by the control she feels compelled to maintain continually. One gets the feeling that the fear of chaos is always lurking in her classroom. This is not unusual in our schools. When I first began teaching in Harlem, I was advised by a fellow teacher to pick on one boy who looked like he might be a leader and reduce him to tears on the first day of class. That way, I was assured, things would never get too far out of hand. I was also told that if you don't show force you'll never gain control. My experience, however, has been quite different. If you set sensible limits, respect students and command their respect by the intelligence of what you offer them as a teacher, control can be replaced by the kind of give-and-take that characterizes all self-governing groups.

Zajac would never be overtly cruel, but in a subtle way she intimidates her class. Like many authoritarian leaders, she suffers from having to spend so much energy on the maintenance of order. It's draining; she finds her work exhausting. In addition, she's isolated in her classroom. There are no other adults around, no community of learning to be a source of strength and ideas. Her classroom is a little box, sealed off from the world.

Kidder shows Zajac experiencing teacher burnout in the middle of the year and depression at another time. In the spring we see her wondering if she's going to make it to June. There are good moments too, but Zajac's life, like those of many other teachers throughout the country, is plagued by loneliness and doubt. In one poignant moment in the book she looks at Judith, one of her favorite students, and speculates on all the things that Judith can do, options that were not available to intelligent and motivated women when Zajak was in the fifth grade. Would she have been a teacher if given Judith's choices? Perhaps not, but Zajac doesn't let the

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"might have been" destroy her genuine attempts to reach whomever she can. She is a good person who takes her work seriously and gives more of herself every day than should reasonably be expected of her. Kidder has created a semitragic figure, a middle-class woman doing society's dirty work, with no support, in a job usually held by women. However, Kidder doesn't see beyond this one teacher's story to other teaching stories that are more hopeful. He leaves the reader with a dangerous romanticization of one way of teaching—an uncritical way that shuts off creativity and turns away from solving the problems of educating the poor.

However, all women teachers are not like Chris Zajac. An increasing number of them, influenced by feminism, open education and the work of theorists like Paulo Freire, have begun to take a serious look at how schools work against teachers and students alike. They are trying "to take certain action both in their own lives and in their teaching to try to become actors in history who can in some measure transform the reality they have inherited." This quote is from Kathleen Weiler's *Women Teaching for Change: Gender, Class and Power*, which will certainly not have as many readers as Kidder's book and yet is much more important for people interested in how teachers can be positive forces for change in the schools.

Weiler's book is a study of the lives of a number of women high-school teachers. It examines their histories and looks at the forces that drove them to become teachers. It analyzes "the ways in which 'girls' are reproduced in a society dominated by male hegemony" and talks about ways of empowering the disenfranchised. In this it directly confronts the major problem that wears down teachers like Zajac: the need to maintain constant control. Weiler would substitute a congenial and democratic classroom where self-regulation is organic. She shows us women teachers working to achieve such convivial learning environments and points to a way of working with the poor instead of blaming them for their poverty and lack of education. These teachers confront problems of race, ethnicity and class and in their work "seek to create classrooms that encourage critique on the part of their students in relation to a number of different forms of oppression." Their classrooms are built around circles of learning where the students' voices are validated and the exchange of ideas and perceptions replaces didactic teaching.

The teachers we are introduced to in *Women Teaching for Change* are not unlike Zajac, and I would like to believe that she would enjoy and benefit from the ideas and stories Weiler shares with us. My main regret about Weiler's book, however, is that it is not likely to be read by the Chris Zajacs or the large popular audience that Tracy Kidder commands. And even if some of them did pick it up, I worry that the book's academic format and its use of the pedantic vocabulary of "critical theory" would quickly convince most people that it was not addressed to them. Unfortunately, academic critics of education speak a special language that creates the same kind of elitist readership that their theories criticize. Still, Weiler has many good stories to tell and I hope she eventually tells them for more of us, in layman's terms. We need a popular literature of democratic education, one as well crafted and vivid as Kidder's *Among Schoolchildren*. As it is, what most people will read is Kidder's portrayal of a goodhearted but overburdened teacher facing problems that she cannot be expected to solve. □

Pop and Circumstance

JON WIENER

NO RESPECT: Intellectuals and Popular Culture. *By Andrew Ross. Routledge. 269 pp. $32.50. Paper $13.95.*

Beginning with the Rosenbergs and ending with feminist porn, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* argues that popular culture provides a crucial political arena for challenging established authority and that radical intellectuals need to engage its liberatory potential. Andrew Ross, who teaches English at Princeton University, writes that popular culture "speaks enthusiastically to the feelings, desires, aspirations, and pleasures of ordinary people"; it expresses disrespect for, and at times opposition to, existing structures of authority. But it also contains "explanations" justifying the maintenance of that authority and suppresses the most radical criticism of the status quo. Thus, popular culture supports both populist self-respect and established authority.

How can a left politics negotiate this treacherous terrain? Ross argues that we need to reject the conspiratorial view that "mass culture" is imposed upon a passive audience, lulling it into apathy while creating profits for corporations. But we should also reject the populist view that sees mass culture as the authentic expression of popular interests. To understand it, he argues, we need to look beyond those who produce it (artists and the culture industries) and those who consume it (audiences, markets and subcultures). Ross maintains that understanding popular culture requires paying attention to the intellectuals who "patrol the ever shifting borders of popular and legitimate taste, who supervise the passports, the temporary visas, the cultural identities, the threatening 'alien' elements, and the deportation orders, and who occasionally make their own adventurist forays across the border."

The book focuses on four cultural traditions that are primarily generational: old left intellectuals of the 1940s, bohemian intellectuals of the 1950s, the Pop movement of the 1960s, and intellectuals of the contemporary feminist and gay liberation movements. Throughout, Ross provides a relentless critique of intellectuals who defend traditional high culture and see themselves as heroic, unattached dissidents; he also criticizes left intellectuals who view popular culture as a means of improving the political ideas of working people. He contrasts these "traditions of suspicion, recruitism, and disaffiliation" with the "more exemplary model of intellectual engagement and activism" provided by feminist and gay intellectuals, who view popular culture as one of the contradictions of living with capitalism, insisting that "the institutionalizing or the commercializing of knowledge does not seal the fate of political criticism" and arguing for what Ross and others call "the creativity of consumption"—a provocative concept guaranteed to drive orthodox Marxists to screaming fits.

Ross explores the cultural life of the old left, his first case, by examining the attack mounted by liberal intellectuals against Julius and Ethel Rosenberg's

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Death House Letters. That attack shows how cold war culture was organized around a contrast between the foreign and the domestic, the outside and the inside of America's mass-produced popular culture. Julius and Ethel wrote the letters to each other in prison while the courts were hearing appeals against their death sentences. They were published in 1953 as part of a campaign for clemency, and came under sharp attack, especially from critic Robert Warshow, who argued that the letters proclaim "the awkwardness and falsity of the Rosenbergs' relation to culture, sports and to themselves," but also from writer Leslie Fiedler, who described the Rosenbergs' letters as a "manifestation of the Stalinized petty-bourgeois mind." (Fiedler's piece appeared in the inaugural issue of *Encounter*, which turned out to have been funded by the Central Intelligence Agency.) Petty-bourgeois taste ordinarily is viewed as conformist, but Ross observes that when its "claim to dignity and respect" took on a self-conscious political authority in the Rosenbergs' hands, it was seen as "compromising the higher legitimacy of intellectual authority."

Ross, however, reads the Rosenbergs' letters as documents that provide a feel for the subculture of the Popular Front. What's striking about the letters, he says, is the wide range of their cultural references: Julius and Ethel sang folk music, workers' songs, popular hits and excerpts from symphonies and operas. Julius wrote, "I sing Peat Bog Soldiers, Kevin Barry . . . Tennessee Waltz, Down in the Valley, Beethoven's Ninth Choral symphony." Ethel sang an aria from *Madama Butterfly* and listened to "Ballad for Americans" and Frank Sinatra singing "The House I Live In." They both read Thomas Wolfe, the Beards' *Rise of American Civilization* and books about Jewish culture and history—on Passover, Julius described himself as imprisoned by "the modern Pharaohs." Ethel warned Judge Irving Kaufman to take heed of the punishment that Joan of Arc's judges were promised in Shaw's *St. Joan*. Baseball was a steady presence in their letters, especially the Dodgers, who are praised for "their outstanding contribution to the eradication of racial prejudice."

The Rosenbergs' letters helped mobilize readers, thousands of whom "responded to a discourse which they recognized as addressed to themselves." They suggest the effort made by the Popular Front to establish a dialogue

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between intellectuals and popular culture, which Ross contrasts with the anti-Stalinist left's refusal to take popular culture seriously. If the Communists' conception of popular culture tended toward the romantic and rural, exemplified by folk music, at least they understood that popular culture provided "a terrain on which political meanings could be won or lost." The left today, he argues, needs to develop that understanding in more complex and sophisticated ways.

In subsequent chapters Ross analyzes camp ("In liberating the objects and discourses of the past from disdain and neglect, camp. . . . is the *re-creation of surplus value from forgotten forms of labor*") and Pop (which "arose out of problematizing the question of *taste* itself"). The real heroes of the book, though, are the feminist intellectuals of the camp he calls "anti-antiporn"—those who defend pornography against the argument that women need to be protected from it. The visual images that males consume as porn—and their erotic counterpart for women, romance fiction—"may be a ruse of patriarchy, a ruse of capitalism," Ross writes, but they also represent real pleasure and real desire, and express a resistance to the "patronizing power and missionary ardor" of intellectuals, who claim to know what's best for other people.

"Women-oriented" porn for the home-rental VCR market provides an important case of work that accepts the reality of desire and pleasure. In contrast with male-oriented porn, this work emphasizes "stylized, romantic settings, more intricate narrative frames and build-ups, extended foreplay, and scenarios of mutual pleasure." You can find it at your neighborhood video store under the trademark Femme Productions. (Ross showed feminist porn and safe-sex videos as part of a lecture at Yale's Whitney Humanities Center last fall. One person who attended later called it an "electrifying event greeted with frozen silence by the Yale audience.")

Intellectuals of the feminist and gay movements have pointed the way toward a new political relation to popular culture; they provide what Ross calls "a few useful rules of thumb for constructing a more popular, less guilt-ridden, cultural politics for our time." We ought to recognize that "desires and fantasies . . . do not always 'obey' politically conscious ideas about correctness." We should take seriously the "liberatory uses that might . . . be derived from the personal pleasure and significance" invested in porn and romance; we should protect and advance sexual rights, especially those of sexual minorities; we should listen to "the voice of the exploited or unheard, in this case, sex-workers and nonintellectual consumers"; we should strongly oppose "moral vigilantism, state interventionism and censorship."

Humanists in the university have a special responsibility in these struggles—because antidemocratic power relations are reproduced in large part through the exercise of cultural taste, because humanist academics are specialists in the education of taste and because that education has become "an important area of contestation within the academy, the number one site of credentialism and legitimation."

This book, wild and provocative in many ways, presents a compelling argument about the central role cultural politics ought to play in a revived left. Left politics, Ross concludes, needs a relation to daily life that shares "the matrix of power, pleasure, and desire experienced by all other consumers," one that understands the "pragmatic, democratizing possibilities ushered in by new technologies and new popular cultures." We need a "working sense of a better world [that] will not be remote, utopian, compensatory, or authoritatively deferred until all struggles are over; it will have to be accessible . . . in the daily micropolitical round of lived pleasures and fantasies." □

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ART.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

Braque, Picasso and Early Cubism

Braque's name sounds like a fusion of *brique* and *bloque*, so if there is the deep connection between name and nature entailed by *Nomen est Omen*, his artistic destiny lay with right-angled polyhedra. As a matter of history, he was clearly the first to paint if not cubes then cubelike forms, and was hence the first Cubist to the degree that his implicit theory of painting ideologizes angular solids as exemplified by the cube. The standing anecdote is that the term came from Matisse, who made up the third member of a jury that rejected all Braque's entries for the Salon d'Automne of 1908.

But the paintings evidently made sufficient impression that Matisse told the critic Louis Vauxcelles that "Braque has just sent a painting made of small cubes." When, not long after, Braque exhibited at the Kahnweiler gallery, Vauxcelles wrote that the artist "reduces all, sites, figures, and houses, to geometrical schema, to cubes." "Cubism" had become art world jargon in Paris by the following year, though the cube itself is not especially privileged as a geometrical form in most of the early works.

Such priorities notwithstanding, the exhibition on current view at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City carries the title "Picasso and Braque: Pioneering Cubism." Since the order of names is not alphabetical, the implication is that Picasso was the chief pioneer. In truth, as the organizer of this remarkable exhibition, William Rubin, has himself written, "Braque had already evolved significantly in the direction of Cubism *before* he met Picasso." Even more strongly, "The *earliest* form of Cubism was less a 'joint creation' of Picasso and Braque than an invention of Braque alone."

I would go further. The two artists whose convergence is magnificently documented in this exhibition came from such different directions that almost all the innovative moves had to come from Braque, with Picasso making adjustments to what in his case was a *manner* rather than a style, since the premises of Cubism were alien to his original impulses as an artist. The implication of

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this is that, where there are resemblances between the two artists, they are more or less outward, and disguise altogether different artistic agendas. In any case, if Cubism, in name and artistic substance, emerged only in 1908, then the legendary wonderwork *Les demoiselles d'Avignon* clearly cannot be the "first Cubist work," since it was done early in the summer of 1907. It was not even proto-Cubist. But because it was retrospectively seen as Cubist, it became a docent's commonplace to describe it in terms of geometry, a chill exercise in curves and planes and angles—"a purely formal figure composition," as Alfred Barr described it in an influential book. "Can we be looking at the same canvas?" Leo Steinberg wrote in the first essay I know of that sees the work as "a tidal wave of female aggression" and a complex image of acute eroticism in which women beckon, hoot, squat suggestively and lift their skirts. "Demoiselle" is one of the synonyms for prostitute, and The Avignon was a Barcelona whorehouse. The crossed readings of the stunning work, which opens the show, could not more vividly illustrate the philosophical point that we typically see what we are told to see in art, unless something as powerful as Steinberg's sense for the erotic drives the mists away from the received interpretation and allows us to see that a work believed to illustrate one artistic vision in fact illustrates its opposite.

Once we acknowledge the powerful sexuality of *Les Demoiselles*, we have to acknowledge the deep primitivism of Picasso's work in the period just before and leading up to his Cubism, however much (and irrelevantly) the latter may at times look like Braque's. Braque's was *l'esprit de géométrie*, to use Pascal's famous expression. Picasso's was *l'esprit de finesse*. One was driven by a sense of order, reduction and simplification, for which geometry is a natural metaphor. The other was guided by intuitive and visceral feelings of an almost uncontainable intensity. That their work came to look alike for a certain period must have been due to the mutual perception that each possessed, to the point of genius, what the other lacked, and that a truly whole artist—Braquasso, say—would be magnificent through possessing both Pascalian spirits at once.

If *Les Demoiselles* is not the first Cubist picture, then in truth I am not certain which picture of Picasso's *is* his first Cubist picture. Braque's seems reasonably clearly to have been his

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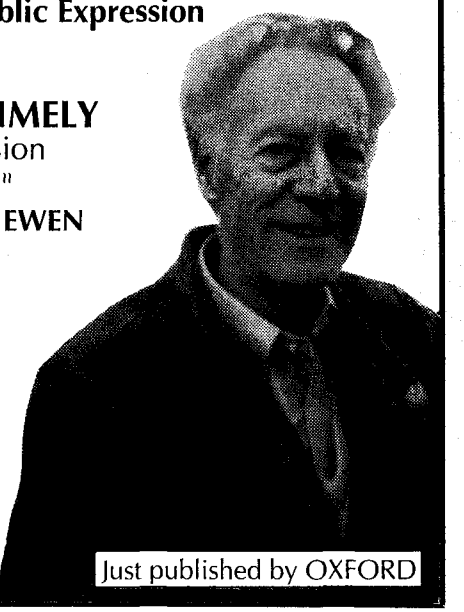

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Houses at l'Estaque, since this is almost certainly the work that prompted Matisse's fateful characterization. But for a very long time into the Cubist era, Picasso seems to have been working out the ideas of *Les Demoiselles*. We know that this painting was inspired by certain primitive Iberian images that greatly aroused Picasso's interest, and that in the period just before the great summary painting he had been much impressed by Gauguin and was an avid reader of American comic strips (he adored *The Katzenjammer Kids*). The females in *Les Demoiselles* lie at the intersection of the primitive, the flat and the violent. There is one further and momentous influence: Picasso visited the Ethnographic Museum of the Palais de Trocadéro and was obviously enough shaken by Negro and Oceanic art to modify two of the demoiselles' faces into fierce and masklike apparitions with, one feels, ritual strips of paint or symbolic scarifications. One gets the sense in the paintings that come afterward that Picasso is painting in an Africanistic mode—even the still lifes have heavy outlines and irregular shapes, as if given form under conditions too primitive for the potter's wheel. Finally, if we go further back in time, Picasso had passed through the Blue Period, in which his figures embodied themes of the widest human meaning conveyed by postures of sentimental desperation. Sex, sorrow and sentimentality, combined with an acute romantic obsession with primitive forms and feelings, were what drove him as artist and pictorial thinker, responding to things "felt rather than seen," as Pascal phrased the sensibility of the intuitive spirit.

Braque's origins as a Cubist could not be more remote. Where Picasso was gripped by medieval Iberian carving, by masks and by comic strips, Braque was dazzled by Cézanne, whose paintings he seems first to have experienced in the Salon d'Automne of 1906. Cézanne, it must be appreciated, was still very obscure and underrecognized. His famous remarks about seeing nature as so many cubes, spheres and cones was written in a late letter to Émile Bernard, who did not publish his memoirs of Cézanne until the 1920s. But Braque must have intuited the geometricity, and in *Houses at l'Estaque* and other paintings of the time he was constituting Cézanne as his predecessor, producing representations that, in Vauxcelles's words, have undergone "a terrible simplification." He appropriated Cézanne's perspective, in which, essentially, distance from the viewer was coded as distance from the bottom edge of the canvas, so that further meant higher. He appropriated Cézanne's brush strokes as well, but coarsened them to the point that a superficial resemblance became available between them and Picasso's stripes of "war paint," despite the absolutely different conceptual provenance. He used but muted Cézanne's colors: tans, grays, grayed yellow, grayish-pink, the blue of heavy skies, a green that looks like the dye soaked out of socks. Occasionally, Cézanne is given a Fauve overlay, with bright colors and a certain curvy rhythm, which is almost a signature cadence in Braque's works of his High Cubist phase. And he seems to have done only landscapes and still lifes. No sex, no sorrow, no sentiment, no violence, no fascination with dark urgencies and savage decoration.

Braque said he and Picasso were like mountain climbers, roped together. Picasso said, "Braque, c'etait ma femme." Where Braque pictured them as solitary climbers of glacial heights, distant from one another but connected by curved lines, Picasso saw them as if two fleshes thrashing in ecstasy and then separated by an emotional rather than a geometrical space. For a time, Braque was a geometrist who believed in being intuitive and even wild, while Picasso had the penetrating vision of the primitive but believed, again for a time, in being geometrical, even accepting the idea that his work involved the fourth dimension as a kind of fancy compliment. And during this period they looked a lot alike, as if by dint of a kind of artistic transvestism. But the meaning and feeling of outwardly similar works are radically different, as the context furnished by this marvelous exhibition enables us to see—*requires* us to see.

Braque was working with planes. Picasso was playing with powers. Picasso called Braque "Wilbourg," after Wilbur Wright, primarily because he saw his compatriot as compiling planes into flying machines (literally "aeroplanes"), not because they were brothers in Cubism. Braque never called Picasso "Orville." Braque strove to *be* Cézanne, removing himself to l'Estaque, in the bay of Marseille, where Cézanne found refuge with his mistress, Hortense Fiquet, away from his father's disapproving eye. There Cézanne painted the blocky houses of Provence. Braque painted those very houses, amid plane trees and

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cypresses, piling them up hillsides. He even wore the sort of round hat in which Cézanne portrayed himself. It was as if he were summoning the spirit of Cézanne to possess his hand and eye. Picasso too was engaged in summoning spirits: Who, looking at the figurines and idols, the shields and fetishes, the terrifying masks and frightening weapons, would not want the power that came with these? Who would want just to be a painter of pictures when there was another ideal of the artist as the capturer of powers? Picasso's images were not constructs out of planes. They were embodiments of great forces that may have expressed themselves in hewn limbs and carved flat features, in material shaped to act, as in ax blades or the bows of ships, where power finds the forms it needs to be effective. The paintings after *Les Demoiselles* go on being harsh containers of fierce powers, rough idols, uncouth effigies to the civilized eye. In his *Friendship* of 1908, Picasso appropriated the forms of masks and war paint, which only in the retrospective vision of Cubism as a stabilized artistic language looks or even could look geometrical.

Braque, who had met Picasso and seen *Les Demoiselles* by 1908, painted his *Large Nude* that year, using harsh black outlines and willed distortions to depict in curves and angles something that outwardly resembles Picasso's primitivist effigies, but only as a kind of artistic cross-dressing. He did not really try it again, so alien was it to his original impulses. Compare *Large Nude* with Picasso's *The Dryad* of the same year, with its dished face and carved nose, its arms like warclubs, its wedged belly like a blunt instrument. Its power comes from within itself, whereas Braque is simply painting a surface with savage cosmetics. The first really Cubist nude that I was able to identify is Picasso's drawing *Standing Nude From Back*, in which the body is faceted into triangular planes as if shaped by a diamond-cutter. But Picasso too was into cross-dressing artistically by then, and painted some houses and trees that could have been done by Braque, save that the trees look like spear points instead of abstract cones. That the two artists should have exchanged clothing, as it were, in the *Large Nude* and in Picasso's Braquelike landscapes, strikes me as a kind of ritual of marriage, like the mingling of blood. There is one work that could almost be a collaboration, Picasso's *Woman With a Book* of 1909, where the subject, all

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lumps and columns, sits like a pile of rocks, musing about whatever she may have read in the book held loosely in one hand while she leans upon the other. In the upper left corner is a woods as Braque would have painted it. It is as if the two sets of impulses lie here side by side. But true Cubism is a hybrid, the offspring of an intercourse between planes and powers, a kind of Minotaur, half Apollonian and half Dionysian, like the theorems of Euclid beaten out on a war drum.

Because he was the artist of planes, Braque was the more innovative in several ways that came to be standard in Cubism. Because he had to translate objects into their planar surfaces, he inevitably depicted the world in terms of flatnesses, and so found his natural subjects in pages, shadows, walls and the faces of guitars. His *Musical Instruments* of 1908 is a small lexicon of Cubist images. Picasso, whose habitat was three-dimensional, saw mandolins as swollen curvatures with holes. Braque pulls everything toward the surface; Picasso presses everything back in space. By 1910, Braque had introduced writing in the form of musical staves and notes. The musical notations in *Musical Instruments* were simply gray swipes, like Picasso's striated masks. But once real notation is made, a philosophical line has been crossed: To represent notes as notes really look is really to write notes; one might as well paste in a sheet of music. One feels the collage an inevitability at this point. I find it surprising that Picasso, a student of comic strips, where image and text occupy the same panel, had to follow Braque's lead in bringing words in among his images.

Braque's basic image was the cluster of houses, ascending the slope at l'Estaque; his direction is upward. Picasso's basic image is the idol squat on the ground; his direction is down. Braque's elements, in the Aristotelian scheme, are fire and air. Picasso's are water and earth. As Braque became the artist of overlapped planes, his solution to the problem of perspective drove his forms up toward the top edge of the canvas—and since the forms come forward and drive upward, soon his work becomes one with the surfaces on which he pastes and writes things. Both artists did a *Woman With Mandolin* in 1910, and though they look immensely alike, Braque's belongs to a series of ascending compositions, whereas Picasso's is tacitly a three-dimensional arrangement of forms brought to the surface against their will. But in autumn of that year, Picasso did a portrait of the collector William Uhde that Braque could not have touched. Look especially at the winged collar, exactly what Picasso needed, a three-dimensional object created by a fold into something nearly flat. Uhde's suit is transformed into folded stuff—pockets, lapels, handkerchief. Even the face seems tailored (which may be a deep piece of characterization), all pleats and cuffs, with a mouth like a buttonhole. It was an elegant piece of origami. Just as the collage fulfilled Braque's approach to painting, the folded paper sculpture fulfilled Picasso, each using the third dimension in a radically different way.

Picasso had to paint his way out of the planes as from a maze: He was the Minotaur, Braque the artificer Daedalus. By 1913 the idol had returned. Picasso took the planes apart and built someone as awesome as the demoiselles, or more so. *Woman in an Armchair* is a terrifying assemblage, with breasts like goat udders pegged to her front and the scalloped hem of her undergarment looking like an instrument of martyrdom. Picasso is once more back in a world of primordial religious energy, Cubism merely a costume he had put on and then taken off. Braque, wounded in the war, never really stopped being a Cubist when he returned to painting.

This is one of the great exhibitions. It must be seen at least twice. See it first naïvely and immediately, as if you did not know painting's future, and watch Cubism emerge like a destiny unfurling. The installation provides an astonishing moment when one issues out of the last gallery back into one of the first, as if having executed a loop in time. To emerge from what Cubism turned into—wild edifices of interlocked forms—and encounter its youth—the suddenly rather dowdy *Houses at l'Estaque* or *Musical Instruments* or Picasso's voodoo dolls—is to have a breathtaking revelation of how big a distance has been traveled. The second time see it from the perspective of this revealed future, having now read through the superlative catalogue, especially the documentary chronology by Judith Cousins. Note especially the ingenious pairings of parallel Braques and Picassos by whoever designed the book. And murmur thanks to William Rubin, without whom this would not have happened, leaving the history of modern art in the darkness of misperceptions. ☐

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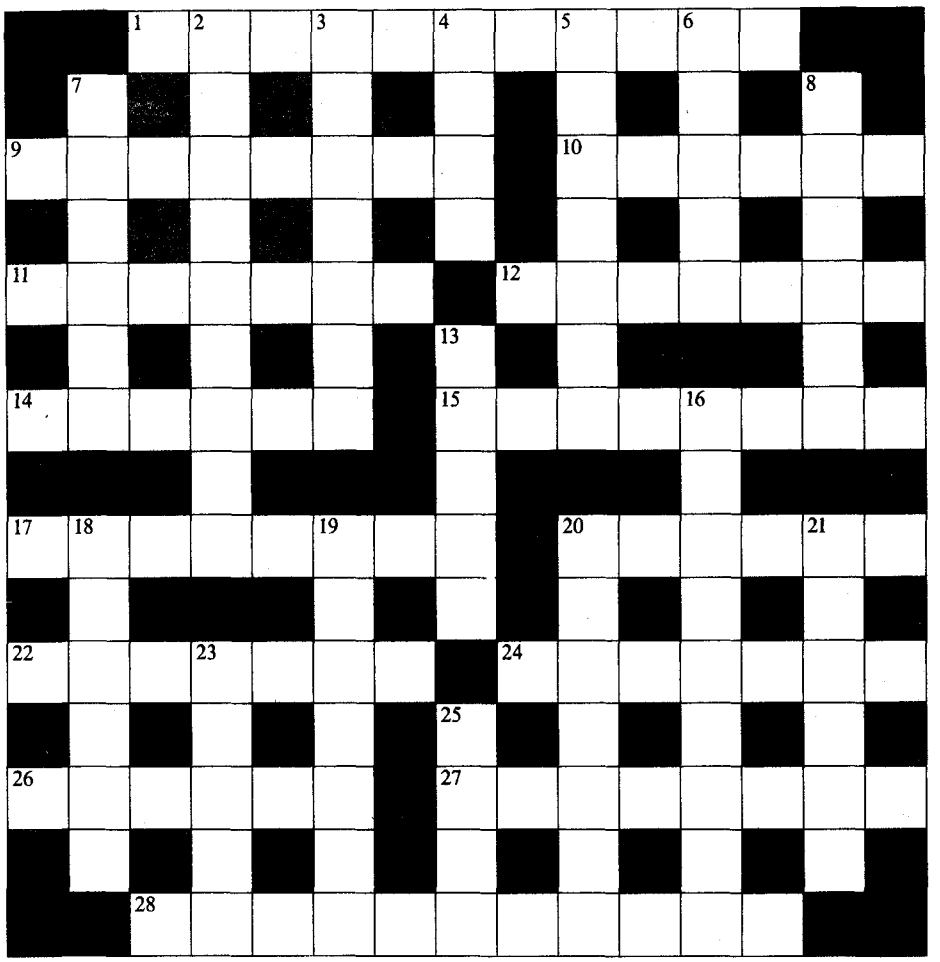
B	O	S	T	O	N	■	T	E	A	P	A	R	T	Y
I	■	A	■	G	■	A	■	N	■	L	■	U	■	E
R	A	N	K	L	E	D	■	D	I	U	R	N	A	L
T	■	C	■	E	■	A	■	E	■	M	■	I	■	L
H	A	T	E	D	■	M	A	D	■	B	A	N	J	O
O	■	U	■	■	■	S	■	■	■	■	■	T	■	W
F	E	M	U	R	■	A	F	A	S	H	I	O	N	■
A	■	■	■	U	■	L	■	N	■	I	■	■	■	J
■	C	O	R	N	B	E	L	T	■	T	I	A	R	A
N	■	U	■	■	■	■	■	E	■	■	■	M	■	U
A	F	T	E	R	■	A	N	D	■	A	G	A	I	N
T	■	M	■	A	■	O	■	A	■	G	■	Z	■	D
I	N	O	R	D	E	R	■	T	E	R	M	I	N	I
O	■	S	■	I	■	T	■	E	■	E	■	N	■	C
N	A	T	I	O	N	A	L	■	L	E	A	G	U	E

Crossword Puzzle No. 2263

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 One top executive of a weekly magazine has to be early, at least! (5,2,4)
9 The sort you get to see at the 3 down, probably. (8)
10 Such as Clio in our time should be entertained by what Victoria said we are not. (6)
11 A controversial writer in a hurry to depart for good? (7)
12 See 4 down
14 One wouldn't say "yes!" to a unit of fineness! (6)
15 Some horn prepared this way may have something to do with sex! (8)
17 Shows how a term, anyways, applies to the old person with a boat like Gunga Din? (8)
20 Do they have to wear leaves, or are they just symbols of things like English, music, etc., at college? (6)
22 Performed by ringers, perhaps—but quickly made by certain artists on the stage. (7)
24 The pansy stem shows that all these go for the launch. (6).
26 One of a different stripe sometimes associated with the collar? (6)
27 Things that shouldn't be eaten with a knife by workers and people commonly associated with the land. (8)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

2 Devilish types treat badly what one with a cause sometimes does. (11)

DOWN

2 Thumb, commonly? (9)
3 *Realité* as a bad form of what might be found in the workplace, for the very conventional? (7)
4 and 12 across The route one reputedly took to the poorhouse is now just past the prime. (4,3,4)
5 One is not supposed to have a pet, since the care of such may be difficult. (7)
6 From out here you see a kisser. (5)
7 A take-away order with color on cue, possibly. (6)
8 In part a wheel, but sounds like a regular guy! (6)
13 One article about another one of Cawdor. (5)
16 A bad job, badly started (with no beginning) could belong in the 3! (5,1'3)
18 Try to give it this, while spinning. (6)
19 Some art is poorly done by one who should be a real artist! (7)
20 Prediction for a a rather nice spring in London? (7)
21 Merits 22, perhaps, but possibly pays up anyway. (6)
23 What is proper about the head of the Establishment is only relative! (5)
25 Soup mixture that demands work, perhaps. (4)

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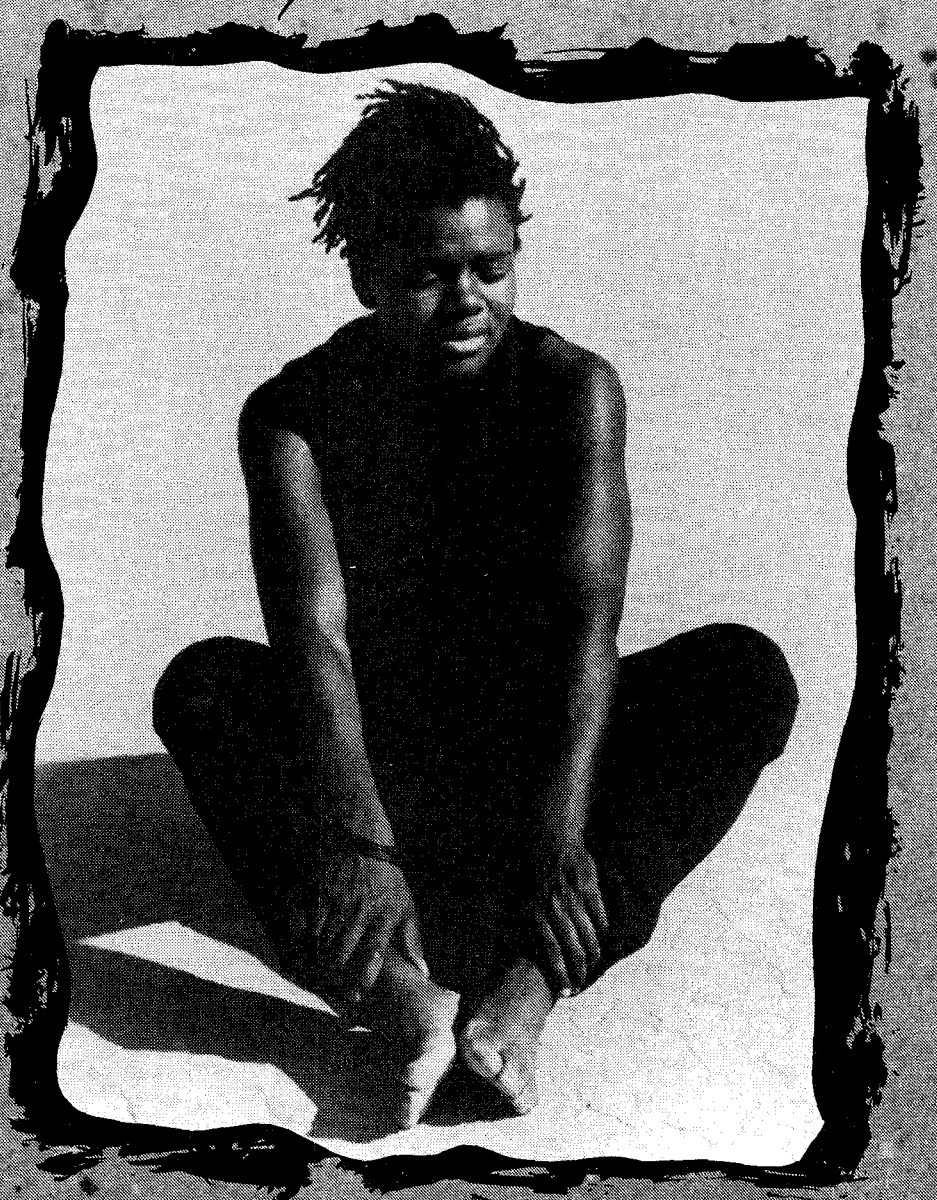

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